Theresa Garvey

THROUGH-TRAFFIC

THROUGH-TRAFFIC

Russell W. Davenport

NEW YORK
GROSSET & DUNLAP, PUBLISHERS

PRINTED AT THE *Country Life Press*, GARDEN CITY, N. Y., U. S. A.

COPYRIGHT, 1930
BY RUSSELL W. DAVENPORT
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

FOR

AMY E. DuPONT

For the conception of Washington Boulevard I am indebted to a specialist in the field of New York City real estate, who submitted his plans and estimates to me, and sacrificed a lot of his time. My thanks are also due to a member of a prominent Wall Street brokerage house, and to a lawyer, for their suggestions and patience.

PART I

THE halfback who had kept the Yale cheering section on its feet most of the season ambled downstairs on his way to breakfast. His name was Joseph Herd, and this was his first appearance at home since his expulsion from an adoring university. An early-morning Murad drooped from his full lips and made him squint one of his eyes. As he descended the last flight, along a wall hung with photographs of Grecian statues and archeological excavations, he could hear the family lunching in the dining room, and, not without a certain reluctance, heard his stepfather, Willard Jencks, elaborating his theory of "profit as a secondary consideration." The glances he was about to receive (from Mr. Jencks, from his mother, from his stepsister Caroline, and from any intimate of theirs who might be present); the unambiguous allusions to will power, and the admonitions, were all known to him in advance, because this was the third experience of the kind. Failing at St. Paul's, he had prepared for college in the West for one year, and in the East, with a special tutor, for another. He had entered Dartmouth for half a year, and the following fall, from this fulcrum, was

lifted by powerful friends into the freshman class at Yale. Here he remained by a special arrangement with the dean until mid-terms of sophomore year, which happened to occur after the football season had closed. The football committee had rather congratulated itself on preserving him so far. When, having won the Harvard game almost single-handed, he turned in four courses under fifcy and neglected to take his examination in a fifth, they gave him his Y and sent him back to the so-called bosom of his family. There was nothing new in this experience, but he now regretted having lain in bed so late.

The Jencks residence resembled a hotel in the fact that meals were served there all day. Grandfather Herd breakfasted at six-thirty, Mr. Jencks at seven-thirty, Mrs. Jencks (in bed) at nine, and Caroline at nine-thirty or ten. At noon Grandfather returned from his office for a heavy lunch. At twelve-thirty, when Joseph was not away at school, the schedule reverted to breakfast. At one Mr. and Mrs. Jencks attended high luncheon, which the heir-apparent tried to skip or else put off until two or three o'clock. Tea was served at four-thirty for Caroline, at five for Mrs. Jencks, and sometimes at five-thirty for Mr. Jencks. Grandfather ate supper at six, everyone else had caviar and cocktails at seven. Dinner was at seven-thirty or eight. There was then an interlude of three hours until Mr. Jencks had his hot milk. At midnight Caroline cooked scrambled eggs. Another period of starvation ensued until dawn, when the heir-apparent

visited the pantry to smother his inexpressible troubles under chicken wings and drumsticks.

Their gray-stone house on a corner of Park Avenue was not typical of New York, being modern and under the influence of the French Renaissance. An elaborate iron grille shielded its glass door from the avenue. You entered through a vestibule into an imposing foyer, on one side of which was the formal drawing room, and on the other the dining room. In the rear was a small office for Mrs. Jencks's secretary, and this had been especially useful when Caroline was making her début two years ago. Up one flight you would find the library, the apartment of Mr. and Mrs. Jencks, and Caroline's room (Caroline was Mr. Jencks's daughter by a former marriage). Grandfather Herd and Joe lived on the third floor, together with whatever house guests happened to be around.

In any difficult situation Joe had an easy mannerism of walking with his knees slightly bent, and his broad squat shoulders stooped. The pace was a kind of heavy jaunt and made you aware of power in the back of his neck. A square jaw was held forward, though not impudently, and a kind of laconic smile widened his mouth. These motions indicated neither embarrassment nor gasconade, but they advised you of a personality in control of itself, and remote. He now mounted the two steps from the foyer to the dining room, and noted that all conversation tripped and fell silent. He had not seen any of these people for two months. What he regretted most about his expulsion from college was

that he would be expected to live with them for the rest of the winter.

His bland stepfather was the only one who knew what to do, rising from the head of the table, one hand holding his napkin, the other outstretched to Joe. "Welcome, Joe," Mr. Jencks said.

His mother was at the foot of the table near the entrance to the dining room, but she had not turned to greet him, and he had not expected her to. He treated her like a younger first cousin. He walked the length of the table, in the manner I have described, and took his stepfather's hand.

"Home again," he said, with that laconic smile.

"Yes, and very welcome," Mr. Jencks said, implying that his attitude had been reached after considerable moral effort.

Joe smiled no more. Caroline was on Mr. Jencks's left, facing the Park Avenue windows, and he turned to her, placing his hand on her shoulder. He squeezed the shoulder, passing behind the chair. He was fond of Caroline. "Hi Cal." He continued behind the next chair, which was occupied by a sportsman named Delaney, who was manager for Mr. Jencks. "Hi John." His mother was now looking at him with her childish sea-gray eyes. He leaned over her and kissed her cheek. She patted his shoulder. Neither of them said anything.

"When did you get in?" Caroline asked, as Joe sat down in a chair facing herself and Delaney.

"'Bout two o'clock."

"This morning?"

"Sure."

"I think you should have waited in yesterday for us, Joseph," his mother said.

Joe grunted.

"You hurt our feelings considerably," Mr. Jencks said. "Jerome says that you arrived at four yesterday and left the house immediately. I think it would have been more considerate, and a better policy, to come to us in your trouble, rather than to drink all night with your—eh—cronies." He wiped his mouth with three brisk strokes of his napkin.

Having transferred one Shredded Wheat to his plate, from a dozen of these articles stacked before him, Joe ground it with chubby fingers and inundated it with cream. He was concentrated, apparently, on the Shredded Wheat, and did not speak. Behind his rounded, well-tailored back Park Avenue was electrified with late November. Sunlight reflected from its cold pavements enlivened the cobalt ash trays of the luncheon table.

"Maizie said she saw you last night," Caroline said.

This interested him. "Where did she see me?"

"At Tony's, I think."

"Wasn't at Tony's."

Caroline sighed. She had been in love with Joe once—when she was a little girl. She found Delaney looking at her, and smiled at him. Joe happened to look up from his Shredded Wheat at that moment, saw the smile, and then stared at Delaney with steady green eyes. Delaney fidgeted.

"Grandfather's upstairs taking his nap," Mrs. Jencks said. "He wants to see you when he gets up, Joseph."

"What time?"

"At two-thirty."

"I should advise you not to antagonize him," Mr. Jencks said, leaning forward. "I've never seen him in such a state. The day he heard what you had done—or eh—what you failed to do—he——"

"What did he do?"

"I think I had better let him tell you himself," Mr. Jencks said. "I merely thought it my duty to warn you not to take your usual lackadaisical attitude toward what he has to say. I may say he feels completely disillusioned about you. I may say he's at the end of his patience."

Mr. Jencks took a mouthful of custard, while the others waited for him to finish what his voice had already implied. "You must offer him something," Mr. Jencks said, recovering from the custard. "I don't mean a mere apology. I mean a real offer—work for a year in our office and stop drinking. Something of that nature—something *real.* Otherwise——"

"Otherwise——" his mother said, breaking in emphatically.

"No, no!" Mr. Jencks cried. "That's all right, Diana!"

"Very well," Diana said disagreeably. "But I wish he would try to remember his father."

And although they all noted the redness of Joe's face after this remark, none but Caroline knew how furious he was. None but Caroline could sense the volume of Joe's controlled emotions; and even she had no idea—no idea whatever—of the particular

event in the past which caused his anger to be so murderous.

Thirteen years ago in the Herds' Adirondack camp, Joe lay in his cot staring up at the dark ceiling of the cabin. He could imagine the luminous minute hand on the dial of his watch creeping past the half hour, and on up the other side toward midnight. At least once a minute, since nine o'clock, he had pulled the watch from under his pillow and examined it. He was not at all sleepy, having stolen from the kitchen two tin cups of coffee and a dozen bars of chocolate. The object of his vigil was a voyage of the flagship *Zanzibar*—a black canoe—to meet the battleship *U. S. Grant*, which was to put out from the Cummingses' camp half a mile down the lake at the same unholy hour. Just what was to be the purpose of the rendezvous would be decided by Admiral Herd and Vice Admiral Cummings after they were safely on the midnight waters; at the moment, any objective beyond launching the *Zanzibar* seemed remote.

He intended to climb out of the window, that he might not wake Miss Stevenson who slept in a second bedroom of this cabin, which was otherwise Joe's exclusive domain. Half an hour ago he had heard the guides treading past, on their way from the main camp where his mother was sleeping, to the lean-to a few hundred yards up the shore of the lake; and after that the Adirondacks had sunk into a tired silence, except for the sway of pine boughs and the mysterious small crackings of twigs, which you

could never trace. There was no entertainment at hand, except the flow of time, which had slowed its passage; and the smell of sweetish pine walls, and poignant balsam, and the striding smell of neatsfoot oil. He could wait no longer. Pushing the covers away from him, he drew his clothes on over his pajamas (in case of an emergency entrance), and pulled on a pair of thick woolen socks instead of shoes. He struggled into a roughneck sweater, buckled a hunting knife to his belt, and dropped into his pocket a small flashlight and the six remaining bars of chocolate. Then the long, cautious exit through his window began.

He had just swung his leg onto the sill when the noise of someone mounting the steps of the main cabin halted him. In the light of a half moon he peered across the hundred feet of clearing that divided his domain from his father's, and then hastily withdrew his leg. His father was trying to open the front door over there. The Colonel had been on a fishing trip with Mr. Cummings at the north end of the lake and had not been expected back for several days. Why had he returned at this hour? The front door was apparently locked, which was an unusual event in itself. Colonel Herd now began pounding it violently. This continued for half a minute, when the look-out and the midnight woods were both startled by "Diana! Where are you?"

Why should his father be locked out in this way, instead of walking into Mummie's cabin and kissing her? Something was badly wrong. Obeying his instincts like an animal, he crouched low, so that

nothing but his forehead and eyes appeared above the window sill. He began to tremble. "Diana! Are you in there?" He could not say what it was that frightened him. Some terrible premonition, of which he was not even conscious, held him clutching the sill. Then a window in the main camp opened and he heard his mother call, "Who's there?"

She too sounded frightened.

"It's me. Frank. Why is the door locked?"

"Why Frank! Wait a minute and I'll let you in."

There were a few seconds of silence, and during this time the scout at the window sill stared at the rear of his father's house with widening eyes; for the figure of a man had emerged from the kitchen door and was now sneaking around the side of the house next to Joe's cabin. Joe could not see who it was, but the inference was plain that the man and his father were not supposed to be in the house at the same time. The figure stopped in the shadow, and just then the light was switched on in the living room and Joe could hear his mother unlocking the front door from the inside. Then the door opened and disclosed Colonel Herd on the porch in high waterproof boots and flannel shirt.

"What's the matter, Diana? Are you sick?"

"Why no, Frank. Why are you home?"

"Why do you keep the door locked?"

So many questions all at once disquieted Joe, who was waiting for an explanation of the man in the shadows. Presently his mother said, "I'm not very well and I've been nervous lately." She drew the

Colonel into the house. "I'm nervous without you, Frank."

Squeezed up against the window sill with excitement, his heart racing, Joe realized that the prowler was trying to get to the boat landing without being discovered by his father. But once the door had closed behind the Colonel, Joe would be left to handle the villain alone. In the dark. In the spooky Adirondacks. There was no time for thought. The action of his lungs was purely reflexive. "Dad!" he called. "Dad!"

Simultaneously, the door of the main cabin, not quite closed, was flung open again; and the man outside the house stopped, facing Joe's window in fright. By light reflected from the sides of his own cabin, Joe recognized him. It was John Delaney, the guy who had been Mummie's beau during the war and who had given Joe a bicycle klaxon that did not work. He was staying over at Caroline Jencks's camp, and the older girls on the lake were always gassing about him. Here he was now, at Joe's mercy, staring at the unexpected oval face in the window. He stood thus for a fraction of a second, then turned, and ran like a dark ghost toward the woods behind the camp.

I don't know that Delaney would have been saved if he had stood his ground, but certainly his flight had the same effect on Joe that it would have had on a watch dog. The kid started to scramble out of the window. "There he goes, Dad! He's running up to the woods!"

By the time Joe reached the ground, Delaney had

disappeared into the night and Colonel Herd had vaulted the railing of his porch. Joe scooted across the clearing like a small dark terrier after a rabbit. He had run a few dozen steps when he was seized from behind and lifted clear of the ground.

"Now what the devil are you up to, Joseph?" His father was angry, and no mistake.

"Let me go, Dad! I wanta track him! Let me go!"

His father dragged him back to the front steps of the camp. "What are you running around like this at midnight for?"

Joe had been playing a scouting game with his own imagination, but now everything fell off into reality. Diana was standing in a blue kimono in the doorway above them, with her hands clasped nervously.

"What on earth does all this mean?" she cried, seeing Joe dragged to the foot of the stairs. "What do you mean, Joseph, by being all dressed at this hour?"

"I saw a man——"

"Oh my God!" Diana cried. "A burglar. I knew there was someone prowling around."

"No, no!" Joe said. "He wasn't a burglar."

Two of the guides, wakened by the shouting, now came running up the path. Colonel Herd stood in the light of the opened door, looking first at Joe, then at his wife. His face was extraordinarily somber. Joe was afraid of him. Seeing the guides, the Colonel collected himself a little. "It's all right, Pete," he said. "I came home unexpectedly, that's all."

"Is there anything you want, Mr. Herd?"

"No. No thanks Pete. Good-night."

"Good-night, sir. Good-night, Mrs. Herd."

The Colonel turned to Joe. "Come on in here," he said harshly, dragging his son up the stairs.

Joe felt that he had done something terribly wrong. His muscles stiffened in anticipation of a thrashing. Diana stared at him as he flopped through the door. She had her hand on her breast. "Thank God I had the door locked," she said.

"He wasn't a burglar, Mummie," Joe said. He looked from one to the other of them, and suddenly realized that he was the possessor of a charge of human dynamite.

His mother laughed a little. "Well, I don't see what else a man—he could be doing here."

This caused the Colonel to fix his terrible stare on Diana for several seconds. Then he turned back to Joe. "Do you know this man, Joe?"

"Sure I know him. He gave me my bicycle klaxon."

"Why Joseph!" his mother cried. "That's an absolute lie. Frank, I want you to——"

"Be still!" Frank Herd cried in an awful voice. "Let the kid tell me."

Diana hung her head and began biting her finger nails nervously.

"Who was this man that gave you a bicycle klaxon?" his father asked.

"Mr. Delaney."

"John Delaney?"

Diana laughed again. "What would John Delaney be doing around here at twelve o'clock at night. That's what I'd like to know."

"That's what I'd like to know too!" the Colonel said. He turned back to Joe and spoke in a quieter voice. "Are you sure of what you're saying, Son? You mustn't say things unless you're absolutely sure."

"'Course I'm sure. I saw him sneak around from the back of the house jest as you were closin' th' door. I saw his face jest after I shouted to you."

They were all three of them silent, as if they had been carved there—the two camping costumes and the blue kimono, in the parchment light of an inexpensive summer lamp shade on the table. Joe's mouth hung open as he watched his father. He never forgot the expression of his father's face in that eternal moment. Under pain, anger was smoldering.

Herd turned to his wife presently, and said, "Why not admit it, Diana?"

Another silence followed while his mother and father looked into each other's eyes. Joe felt that they were hating each other. He had never conceived of this. He could not see how a mother and father could possibly hate—a reversal of the force of gravity. Fear, and an instinct to stand with his father, impelled him to draw close to the Colonel's side and take his big hand. His mother dropped her eyes as he did this. He noticed how white her face was, as if she were sick.

"Very well," she whispered. "I admit it."

Joe felt his father's body stiffen, and the hand that held his squeezed so hard that he wondered if his own would crack. But his father must have some reason for squeezing his hand like this. He stifled his voice and clamped his teeth together, producing

a ludicrous expression on his young, stubborn face, as if he were the aggressor in this tragedy, a diminutive Machiavelli who had planned it out, and was now executing it remorselessly.

His father said: "I suppose I may understand that you don't love me."

Diana shrugged. "Am I to understand that you do love me?"

"Yes."

Diana raised her clenched hand to her forehead. "*Oh*, you are so unfair!" she cried passionately. "Can't you consider anyone but yourself? Can't you see what you've been like ever since you got back from that damned war? You've given me no-o-thing." Her voice broke, but since the Colonel was speechless, she was able to recover herself. "It's been like a tomb around the house. You won't have anybody in. You won't see anyone. You haven't paid any more attention to me than if I were a rag doll!" She paused; gathered more energy; cried, "I implored you not to go over there! I was honest with you. I told you what kind of a person I was! I told you what would happen if you left me! Why should you have gone to France? Willard Jencks didn't go. Ed Kessler didn't go. No man with a position like yours went. Your father *offered* to get you out of it—for my sake." She extended her hand, pleading. "You would go, you would be selfish. You're still selfish, standing there as self-righteous as your father! Of course I did what it's taken you three months to discover. Every other woman did, who had any respect for herself

at all. What did you suppose we'd do? Stand on the doorsteps and wave American flags for you to come home? But you have no idea what it was like!" She clenched her fists again and was silent for a moment, while her passion reached an almost unbearable climax. "To-night had nothing to do with love! Can't you see that? God, I was locked up in your damned house for eighteen months. Nothing but doors and servants and loneliness and silence. Something was bound to happen! Do you think you can have me just when you want me, that I don't ever need you? Do you think I'm a machine? My God, Frank, it has nothing to do with love!" She burst into tears, turned, and flung herself face-downward onto the couch.

All this while Colonel Herd was squeezing the bones of his son's hand, and yet Joe bore the pain. It was as if his father were transferring some of his own pain to the admiral of the lake. It was as if they were sharing this mysterious sorrow with which Diana had burdened them. Joe tried to comfort his father. "Dad. Mr. Delaney's all right. He was a lieutenant, Dad."

The Colonel looked down at his son. His lower lip trembled.

"Why can't Mother have him, Dad, if she wants him?"

Diana lifted her head from the couch. "Be still, Joseph! You don't know what you're saying."

Colonel Herd leaned over his son. "No," he said. He pressed his cheek to Joe's hair. "Thank God, he doesn't."

Women had always spoken of Frank Herd as a fascinating man. Grandfather never agreed with them, but that was because Grandfather understood one element in life—work—which was generally the element that did not interest his son. Frank was brainy and social. He navigated a yacht and owned race horses; he was a clubman and popular with hostesses. When the war broke out he wanted to be an officer and therefore became a colonel. The newspapers had taken him up as the most sensational of the younger millionaires. It was Frank who raised the Herd name into society—that obscure name out of the mills of Worcester, Massachusetts, from which Grandfather had run away at the age of eighteen. Frank's brilliance had bestowed upon it an international prestige, so that it was received in England, France, and Belgium, and was known, wherever Americans are known, as something appallingly in character.

The war had subverted the Colonel. He who used to entertain dinner tables, had become a morose and silent presence, and would sit fingering crumbs, staring at undesired food. He had never been able to shake off the mood of his last night at sea, steaming past the lights along the edge of Rockaway, when, with all his joy at returning to his wife and son, he had been as it were saturated with sorrow, like a tree whose leaves drip with the moisture of a misty day; a kind of cosmic sadness for which he had never yet found an expression; a sense of alienation, immediately verified upon arriving home in the midst of a drunken party, and thereafter immersed in

the scandals and feverish entertainments of his set. He had thought of the war as abnormal. He returned to a world quite as hectic, as careless, as immoral as anything he had encountered abroad.

Affairs with European ladies before the war there certainly had been, yet he had always made an unconscious distinction between women of the Continent and the American girls who were supposed to embody the ideals of hard-working men. The girls with whom he had been brought up, educated at respectable schools and presented among flowers to the matrons of society, formed a nucleus of chastity to which he, and other American wanderers like him, could return, for the purification of their hearts and the preservation of their dynasties. The fantastic aspect of this arrangement had never occurred to him, until the first time he took his wife into his arms after his return. Diana Maxwell was the only woman he had ever loved with finality. It had been difficult to win her—she was Venus's daughter, not Saturn's—but it had no more than occurred to the Colonel, while he was in France, that she could be unfaithful to him. But as soon as he came back he knew that she had changed. There was a veil around her body—he could not describe it—but he felt that he might as well have cut loose in Paris. Who would know? And who would care if anyone did know? That kind of thing was accepted now, not only by Diana's friends, but even by eighteen-year-old kids. . . .

At first he suspected nothing tangible of Diana. She was a different woman; but he too was different,

and perhaps he himself was too poisoned to judge. But there had been some talk about a young man who worked for Willard Jencks down at the Herd offices. People evaded any questions about him. Slight evidences accumulated. The Colonel could only brood over possibilities—terrible instruments of the imagination which seemed to be prying loose the joints of his mind. Gloom settled, and wrapped itself so completely around him that he would no longer sleep in his wife's room. In a last effort to regain his humor he had come up to the Adirondacks to fish—to have Diana to himself. This evening, at the campfire, among the low birches that characterized the northern end of the lake, Cummings had mentioned, accidentally, that Delaney had arrived in Jencks's camp a few days ago. The Colonel had not heard of this before. After dinner he told Cummings that he was going for a paddle on the lake and would be out most of the night. He had grown peculiar—men did not argue with him any more. Cummings merely told him to be careful. . . .

Now he pressed his cheek to his son's hair, realizing that this kid, with all his life ahead of him, must be saved. Such, indeed, was the Colonel's control as he smiled down at the oval face that Joe felt that his father and mother and Delaney had been playing a game, which was over now; and although he was sorry that Dad had lost, his relief at not being spanked for being up and dressed at midnight overcame this. The Colonel crossed to the couch and lifted Diana's body into his arms. He pressed his lips on hers and whispered something that his son

could not hear. After he had whispered, Joe saw his mother reach up and put her arms around his father's neck. That made him happy again. He began licking the hurt bones of his hand. Everything was coming out all right. He could not know, of course, that the Colonel had asked Diana to do this for his sake.

The Colonel stood looking at Diana a long time. Then he turned abruptly and switched out the light. He felt for his son's hand in the darkness. He led his son out of the room, and closed the door with gentleness, like a man leaving a new grave.

"You mustn't mind, Son," he said. "You must forget this." He was leading Joe toward the cottage. "The war drove us all a little crazy," he said. "Mummie and me both. You must take care of Mummie. Don't ever do anything to hurt her—and never let anything she does drive you away from her. You must remember—she's a girl."

They met Miss Stevenson at the front door of Joe's cottage. She was dressed and preparing to look for Joe. "Oh!" she cried. "Oh goodness, Mr. Herd! Has anything happened?"

"Happened? Oh no. You might put Son to bed, though," the Colonel said.

The Colonel's mood grew bitter during the night. He followed the trail up the Chieftain, through brush and trees. By dawn he was on the edge of the cliff that looks like the head-dress of an Indian chief. He was very small up there. The morning moved over the woods below him and painted the southern tip of the lake. Frank Herd held in his hand a

Lüger which had belonged to a German colonel killed by an American barrage in the Argonne, behind which Herd's regiment had advanced. "It was useless to go 'way over there," the Colonel said. He held the revolver in the palm of his hand, jogging it. The memory of the German's mutilated skull amused him; he smiled down at the Lüger ironically. "I think the name was Von Herz," he said. He frowned at the morning. Presently he raised the gun to his temple and fired.

The body was discovered at the foot of the cliff a month later, and even the Lüger was lying there, a few yards away. Little Joe's brooding mind easily reconstructed the scene. He grew up in the understanding that Diana, Delaney, and himself had murdered his father.

Diana was frightened. The news of Frank Herd's disappearance created so great a scandal that reporters from New York invaded the peaceful summer camps of the Adirondacks, and search parties beat the woods, signaling each other with shots. Long before they found Frank's body she knew that he had committed suicide. She was appalled. The fact was that she had loved Frank as much as she could love anyone. She was not an evil woman, unless superficiality is evil. The admiration of men was no mere decoration to her life, it was a necessity. She loved no man very deeply, but she was capable of being faithful to certain guarantees. So long as Frank Herd had amused and excited her she was faithful; as soon as Delaney failed to meet his guar-

antees of pleasure and distraction (naturally, he could not meet them now) she threw him away. She had met him at one of those service parties that characterized the war, when Frank was away. He seemed to her romantic. His words stroked her vanity; even his gestures were forms of attention which she had not received from Frank since they had been married. Besides, it was refreshing to have a lover two years younger than herself, and so much so, that she could not resist Delaney even after Frank had returned. The Colonel's gloom made her lover even more important. They had met secretly, a number of times. . . .

After the suicide, she lived in fear for several months, for she realized that should Grandfather or Willard learn that she had caused Frank's death by an affair with a young man in the Herd offices her destruction would be complete. In those days the Herds owned a large estate in Greenwich, and next door to them was the more modest estate of Willard Jencks, who had divorced his wife and had an only daughter, Caroline. Mr. Jencks, lacking all of Frank's brilliant qualities, worshiped the Colonel and had become the family friend upon whom they could rely in emergencies. Frank introduced him to Grandfather, who took him into the office. As Frank's race horses and yachts consumed more of his time, Jencks was substituted for him in the business, and became finally the most active partner of the realty company that Grandfather had founded twenty years before. And it was Diana, in turn, who had introduced Delaney to Jencks, at that very service

party at which she herself had met him. Having had a good deal of champagne, the two men, one of them twenty-five, the other thirty-three, reached an understanding that certainly could not have been reached without champagne. I do not want to imply that the understanding was crooked or disreputable; nevertheless it was certainly based on inside knowledge of each other. Such is the basis of many business partnerships, and explains the phenomenal rise of Delaney to an important position in the Herd Realty Company.

Diana knew that Willard Jencks was ignorant of what she and John had done. Such a thought would never have occurred to him, and he continued to attribute Frank's suicide to a kind of nervous shock received in the war. But Mrs. Herd needed a protector. Especially she needed someone to defend her from her son, who looked at her with such accusing green eyes, and did not seem to realize, and apparently would never realize, that he had been the direct instrument of his father's death. How could she explain to a boy of nine that her affair with Delaney had somehow enabled her to bear with Colonel Herd's unreasonable nervousness? How explain that the Colonel had failed her quite as much as she had failed him? How explain that certain things in a woman's life, or in a man's, must remain secret? And certainly, if this idea could not be explained to Joe at nine, it could not so much as be suggested at twenty-two, after thirteen years of his smoldering accusation. She was helpless. Little by little she had impressed Mr. Jencks with her lone-

liness, and with his own; she compromised him by having him alone to dinner—an indiscretion that caused torrents of Grandfather's anger to pour upon him; she made him feel that he was the guardian of her son; and she caused him to see that Caroline should have a mother in charge of her. Her maneuvers were facilitated by the fact that Mr. Jencks thought her the most lovely woman in the world, had indeed worshiped her from afar. And so, two years after the Adirondack tragedy, in spite of the opposition of young Joe, and in spite of Grandfather's tirades against Willard's divorce, she married him, and settled down in a palace on Park Avenue to finish a life that had so precariously begun.

Observing Diana's overtures toward Willard, Delaney had merely shrugged. He had made love to her for her beauty; he had no desire to proceed further than that. They had had a rapturous eighteen months; you could not ask more than this of any woman, without giving her more than he wished to give, or more than Diana would ever allow him to give. Delaney was a very accurate judge of human nature. He knew that Diana could ruin him at any moment; he knew he could also ruin her. They had put their swords away and lived in the great idealistic shadow of Willard Jencks. There was always the satisfaction of having been her lover long before Willard Jencks had conceived of her in any way but in his dreams.

In the midst of these secrets Grandfather was the fountain of honor from which they all drank. Grandfather was a fundamentalist. Like the rest of his

generation, he had straightened his life out early, and it had stayed the way he put it. He was twice a widower, but had only one son, Frank, and only one grandson, Joe. In effect he had adopted Willard Jencks, who represented everything that Frank should have been; and along with Jencks came Delaney, who was known around the office as Jencks's man, and of whom Grandfather silently disapproved. He thought he ruled them all—and so he did, up to a point. But he was weak against Diana, who could tease him through the maze of his prejudices, and who negotiated her marriage to Willard Jencks, when the time came for that, in spite of Grandfather's violent ideas about Willard's divorce.

So much of the past is necessary to show you why Diana's wish that Joe would think of his father made him so murderously angry. He dropped his spoon on his plate and stared at her. What her emotions were at that moment I have no means of describing, except to point out that she had long ago justified herself, so that she now felt Joe's look to be evil and unfair. The big lashes of her eyes became more prominent as he stared at her. Her beauty bloomed like a flower under the heat of the sun. She was just forty years old.

"Yes," Mr. Jencks said. "Your father was a remarkable man. He gave me my start in life. The best advice I could give you would be to remember him."

Young Herd did not even look at his stepfather, but with his head bowed he picked up his spoon and proceeded to eat his Shredded Wheat. Caroline

scowled. John Delaney took a long drink of water.

"If you would come down to the office," Mr. Jencks said, observing his daughter's expression and shifting to other grounds. "I believe we could interest you. That's what you need. You don't want anything, so you don't get anything. Now I think we could make you want to succeed, because the Herd Realty Company *is* a success, and is getting to be a bigger one all the time. 'Better every day' is our method, you know. I borrowed the idea from that French chap who was lecturing here some time ago. Better—every day. Of course our real motto is 'Serve and Refrain.' I invented that years ago. It means that we are not in the real-estate business for our own ends so much as for the public. Our properties are reliable and our improvements are designed in the interests of the city plans. Our tenements are models of cleanliness and efficiency; our finer apartments are equipped with every comfort that human ingenuity can devise. We work hand in hand with scientists and engineers. Don't think I'm boasting." He laughed a little. "I'm just trying to show you that we have an *ideal* to offer you—the ideal of service, of doing something for others. Why, the mayor's committee recently sent us a vote of thanks for doing more for the new city plan than any organization in Greater New York."

"I heard that Harmon was pretty sore about that vote," Delaney said.

"Harmon thinks he's done more for the city than we have," Mr. Jencks explained to Joe, "but his ideas are quite opposed to ours. He's a very good

man, of course—chairman of the sub-committee of the mayor's committee on traffic. But Harmon's not a business man."

"He's in the wholesale grocery business," Joe mumbled, to everyone's surprise.

"Ah—um," Willard Jencks said. "Yes, of course. But that hardly counts."

Joe made no answer to this.

"How do *you* know about him?" Delaney asked.

"Why shouldn't I know about him? I know him, that's all." Joe began on his third Shredded Wheat.

"Joe knows everybody," Caroline said. "I don't see how you do it, Joe."

"He does it," Mr. Jencks said, "by loafing. If you were to spend ten hours a day at the office, Joseph, you wouldn't know so many people."

"What good would that do?" Joe asked.

The family was rescued from a disagreeable silence by Delaney. "By the way, Willard, that article in the *Express* about Bethlehem and Keystone was encouraging."

"Yes, wasn't it?"

"What was that, Dad?" Caroline asked.

"Well, some information which I have known for a long time was published in the *Express* this morning. You see, the Keystone and Bethlehem roads are going to merge. A gigantic venture," he said. He took a last spoonful of custard.

"It's positively uncanny," Delaney said, "the way that newspaper anticipates everything."

Joe, bowing over his Shredded Wheat, said, "It's a gag."

"A what?" Mr. Jencks said.

"It's a gag," Joe repeated. "The public does what th' *Express* tells 'em to do and the insiders get out. That's what I call a gag."

"In this case," Mr. Jencks said, "you are utterly misinformed. The *Morning Express* is an upstanding public institution. I grant that its predictions come late, but they're accurate, and they do perform the humanitarian function of warning the public. Without that paper, Joseph, the decline last spring would have reached the proportions of a panic."

Joe grunted.

"There's no such thing as 'insiders,'" Mr. Jencks said. "Your lack of experience makes you use the word loosely. As a matter of fact the Fairchilds, who own the paper, are among the greatest benefactors of the nation."

"They don't own it," Joe said.

"What makes you think they don't own it?" Delaney asked.

"Because they sold it," Joe said.

Mr. Jencks wiped his mouth with his napkin and rose from the table. "Come on John," he said. "We've got to get back to the grind."

"All right." Delaney arose. The idea of his "grinding" was incongruous.

"Why Dad!" Caroline said, making peace. "I thought you were going to tell Joe about that big scheme of yours."

"I see no use in telling Joseph anything," Mr. Jencks said, walking around the table to Diana. He leaned over and kissed her. "Good-bye, my

dear." Perhaps, feeling her lips, his sense of duty toward her son was stirred; at any rate he turned to Joe coldly and said, "I have an idea which I would be glad to talk over with you, whenever you condescend to be interested. It involves some sixty million dollars and the management of forty corporations. I would be glad to let you work on every aspect of it. You would learn financing, land valuation, management, construction costs, how to serve the less fortunate than ourselves—everything, in fact, that a real-estate man should know. After your grandfather has spoken to you I certainly hope you will come around to see me."

He bowed slightly, turned, and left the room. He was nearly six feet tall. John Delaney followed him out.

Ever since his father's suicide Joe had had the unpleasant faculty of making himself the most important person in the room. He did not achieve this by speech, or any kind of distinction, but his silence was so intelligent that people hastened to guard themselves from it. For instance, he knew what Uncle Will's giant undertaking was, and he doubted whether it was sound. This kind of secret knowledge, gathered from nameless sources and expressed only with the eyes, would put anyone on the defensive. Mr. Jencks's advice was his form of defense. Mrs. Jencks defended herself by nagging, Delaney by the exercise of a superficial wit. Many strangers, against whom Joe held no secrets, had the same reaction to him. His large mouth was mobile and expressive, and no doubt it spoke to people beneath

their consciousness. For this reason it was more than irritating to live with Joe. He was a destructive presence. If he had an ideal, it was the ideal of having none. He was a realist to the point of cruelty, and this cruelty marked him out from any gathering of persons. No matter how worthless you judged him to be, he kept you conscious of the fact that you had judged him.

He was now alone with the two women, and if you had been the butler walking objectively in and out of the room you could have observed the effect of his silence upon Diana. As Joe scrunched his fifth Shredded Wheat she exchanged a glance with Caroline, but found her stepdaughter more in sympathy with him than she was herself. She then glanced at Joe, but could not tell whether he was angry or bored. Finally she said, "Joe dear, is it necessary to be so disagreeable your first morning at home?"

He grunted.

"We all try to be as gentle as possible," Diana said.

"But we might have given him a chance to eat his breakfast, Mother," Caroline said. "Everyone lands on Joe the moment he steps into the room."

"He *could* have had breakfast earlier," Mrs. Jencks said. She arose from the table gracefully. She had been educated in France and had always the air of the Parisienne. "I'm going to try your man Monet this afternoon, Caroline. Your hair looks too lovely, my dear."

"Oh Monet," Caroline said. "He's a wiz."

"Besides," Diana said with a light smile, "it makes you feel so pictorial, having your hair done by Monet."

Joe grunted again. After his mother had left the room he asked Caroline, "What in hell did she mean by that?"

"Monet was a painter," Caroline explained.

He was like a father grinning at a precocious child. "Where'd she get the line?"

"Oh, I don't know. In Paris, I suppose."

He took a gulp of coffee.

Caroline tapped ashes from her cigarette with a long, pointed forefinger. "It must feel swell to get back into the bosom of this family."

He gave a short laugh and their eyes met understandingly.

"The worst is yet to be," Caroline continued, "as Browning always said. You haven't seen Grandfather yet."

"What's he up to?"

"He's disinherited you." She blew a long stream of smoke from her thin nostrils and looked away from him. Her profile was straight and terse. You admired her shoulders in moments like this. She had held some golf championships.

Joe screwed up his nose with amazement. "Hunh."

"It's a fact." She looked at him now. "He's made almost everything over to Dad and the Herds in Worcester. Dad saw the will."

Joe was trying to assimilate the idea. He had had plenty of money all his life. "So that's what was on their minds."

"Yes," she said.

"They were scared to tell me," he said.

"They had a right not to tell you."

"Sure." He admired the fairness of her mind. Cal was rarely prejudiced. But he said nothing about this admiration—she would have to find it out for herself.

She had found it out long ago. Ever since she was a little girl she had known that he cared a lot about her, and had even known that this was the last thing he would admit. She did not mean love, but a deep affection, as if they were brother and sister. She had that from him, and she knew of no one who had anything more.

He gave her this affection because she had taken the trouble to understand him in each crisis of his life. As she studied his face in the light of this last calamity she saw the lines of it gather into that kind of bewilderment that molds a child's face when it has fallen down. The expression seemed to arise from small muscular whorls, organically united to each other in a composition that could only be called tragic. Caroline had seen the expression before, and had always thought it was more like suppressed hate than grief. Thirteen years ago, after learning of his father's suicide, he had locked himself into his own room for three days. No doubt he had cried; but something else had occurred in that room which had made him a grown-up in short trousers. Ever since then he had refused to study or play, had rarely laughed, had never cried, and had been intimate with rowdies five years older than himself. Ever since then he had dominated gridirons, like a

college star on a prep-school team, or a professional on a college team.

She understood, too, why he loved football—it was an outlet for some evil energy he had, a diabolic play of muscles that frightened her. At the same time, it stirred her profoundly to watch him carry the ball. Before the signals he was lazy and slow, but as soon as the quarterback gave him the play, the angle of his headguard tipped forward murderously, and you imagined his muscles like released steel, which whipped rather than pounded the opposite line. She had seen him annihilate the opposition in this way, particularly off-tackle, or during a wide end-run, when the scourge of those muscles swept diagonally across the field, scarring it, as a whip scars the flank of a horse. She attended all his games because of the thrill that this profound insight gave her; because, in those few moments when Joe was carrying the ball, she understood him as she understood no one else, including herself. She understood him with her imagination.

"It's too darned bad, Josey," she said. "I don't know what you can do about it unless you give in and take their sleeping powders."

"Too much trouble," he said.

"You're awfully lazy," she said, smiling.

"Yeah. I like it."

"Maybe you don't realize what a situation this puts me in," she said carefully. "It means I'll inherit all your money some day. I mean," she said, embarrassed, "you can't exactly picture Dad *losing* it all. You can't dramatize that."

"Hunh."

"I'll give it back to you," she said. "When I get it."

"Wouldn't take it." Joe had finished his breakfast and was fumbling through his pockets for a cigarette. Caroline threw one across the table and followed it with a little silver lighter. When he had lighted his cigarette they both arose. Caroline crossed to him and slipped her arm through his. "It seems to me, Josey," she said as they strolled out of the room, "that you and I know a whole lot more about life than these people."

"Yeah."

"I wonder why. Dad, for instance, just doesn't know anything."

"Yeah."

"Dad still thinks, I suppose, that Mother and Prince Wydjumpsky just played golf together."

They looked at each other intimately and Joe drew heavily on his cigarette.

"We seem to have been born old," she said.

"Maybe we don't know so much," he said. "Maybe we don't give a damn."

"*I* give a damn!" She had her neat foot on the bottom step of the stairs. She turned and looked into his eyes closely, allowing him to see between the little spokes of her brown pupils. "You were born especially old, dear," she said.

They smiled at each other and he patted her shoulder. He did not like to demonstrate affection, and she knew this.

"Nice old boy," she said, shaking him by the

lapels. Then she turned and ran up the stairs to the library.

The sudden ascent left her a little breathless. She turned to him at the top of the stairs. "How about coming out to the Gales' with me?"

"Harry Gale's?" He was climbing the stairs slowly.

"Yes."

"The place where little girls go wrong," he said. "Better watch out, Sis."

"Oh Harry's all right."

"Sure. Harry's a good egg. It's that damned crowd he keeps—everything from margin clerks to pale fairy princes."

"Thought you were democratic."

"I am. But I like to keep it to myself."

"Anyway," she said, concealing a brief pride, "John's taking me out."

"John Delaney?" He stopped three steps from the top. "Aw hell."

"Well?" She was defiant.

"I wouldn't trust him in a movie theater," he said, climbing the remaining stairs.

Caroline swung into the library ahead of him. Watching him enter a few seconds later, she thought he looked older than ever.

He walked straight up to her. "Has that guy been making faces at you?"

She blushed and looked down at the floor. "What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean."

She tossed her head slightly.

"He'll get whatever he can out of you, Cal."

"*Shut* up!"

Joe blinked. For a moment he studied her defiant face, and seeing her as unreasonable as any woman, the muscles of his jaws began working silently. His eyes traveled the length of her body. Had Delaney made the kid? He was conscious of her lines, in a way that threatened the easy relationship of brother and sister. The sensation parted his lips and he breathed through them. He hoped that this was a mere physical desire. He hated love.

It flattered her to find this unexpected power over him. She had wanted the power ever since she was a little girl, but she had come to think of him as inaccessible to women. She now smiled, her lips touched with pride. "I'm going with John anyway," she said, walking over toward the door. She stopped a moment and said over her shoulder, "I guess you're not as old as you look—Joe." Then she vanished into the hall.

Joe shrugged. He lit a new cigarette from the butt of the old one, crossed heavily to the fireplace and threw the butt away. He did not see life with other people. The world seemed a composite of illusions, which people either believe, as children believe in fairies, or pretend to believe, as parents treat the legend of Santa Claus. He could not understand why people should want to make so much money, why they loved or hated so madly, why they fought, why they talked so much, why they considered certain actions immoral, why they refined so subtly on their coarse natures. It all seemed a pother and clacking

of tongues. It all seemed insincere and it made him sore.

He slumped into a Morris chair to wait for Grandfather. He began wondering about Caroline. It was a strange sensation he had had a moment ago, that she wore a dress; this had never occurred to him before and he found it interesting. He would have classed it among the insincerities (that women should have to wear dresses) had it not touched him so personally. Caroline's sudden dress threatened to be an event in his life. He did not like events. The word connoted ethical difficulties and suggested the persecution of a social environment. He nourished a secret fear against emotions of all sorts, whether his own or other people's. He himself wished to live without passions, and thus dispense with any code for the government of them. It was his view that light was in the nature of things: the Creator had merely said, "Let there be darkness." This darkness was the darkness of emotions, which Joe thought it was life's economy to avoid.

I don't know whether this philosophy grew out of laziness or out of fear, but I am sure that it is accurate to say that he feared his own laziness. Knowing that he would never bother to obtain the moral approval of others, he was afraid to enter any situation that would call forth their judgment; knowing that passion involves work, which he would never care to undertake, he had succeeded in eliminating the desirability of passions. . . .

"Well young man! You're back are ye?" It was Grandfather's voice in its most ironical mood.

Joe had been sitting with crossed legs and hunched shoulders. He now arose slowly, walked two steps to the fireplace, and tapped his cigarette. "Hello Grandfather." He then turned. Although his spoken greeting was made with his back to the older man, there was no insult implied as he turned and smiled.

Grandfather Herd was not tall and he had the same blunt shoulders as Joe. The two of them would remind you of gorillas as they faced each other, except that Grandfather held his back straight and kept his chest out. You could tell that he exercised every day. His features were sharp with age, particularly his mouth and chin. The small blue eyes twinkled without mercy. The face, contrasted to Joe's oval one, seemed hatchet-shaped, and the forehead jutted out over the eyes. As usual they did not shake hands.

"Have a pleasant trip from New Haven?"

Grandfather's first question always concerned traveling. He would ask, "Have a nice ride in from Greenwich?" or, if you came to his office by subway, "Subway crowded?" It was a simple way to gain time, and perhaps did not sound so flat to one who had been brought up in buggies.

"Sure," Joe said. "All right."

The next question was more to the point. "Understand ye ain't 'spected to make it agen," Grandfather said.

"That's right."

"What d'ye think of that?"

"Haven't thought much about it," Joe mumbled.

"No? Well I have."

Joe cleared his throat.

"I think ye're a damned bum." Grandfather stooped forward as he said this. Then he turned toward the Park Avenue windows and began pacing the room. He drew out a Pittsburgh stogy and chewed it. Joe produced a box of matches from his coat pocket.

"Have a light, Grandfather."

It was remarkable how much they resembled each other under the surface. Grandfather understood that there was nothing humble in this offer. Like the question about traveling, it was a means of delaying uncomfortable emotions. He turned in his walk. With his cigar between his teeth he allowed Joe to hold a match to the tip of it. He puffed violently. "Thanks," he lisped. Their eyes met. "The trouble with you, Joseph, 's ye got too much money." The expression on the old man's face was shrewd, with his lips parted and his three teeth clamped on the cigar.

"What've I done wrong with money?"

"Don't know what you've done, but I know what it's done to you."

Joe shrugged.

"It's taken ever' scrap of energy out've ye," Grandfather said.

"What blame the money?"

"'Cause Joseph"—the old man pointed his finger—"money's the acid of the soul. It eats it away an' leaves nothin' but th' lazy flesh an' blood."

Joe did not answer this.

"I seen this about ye fer twenty year."

"Twenty years?"

"How old are ye?"

"Twenty-two."

"Twenty-*two* year of observation," Grandfather said, and turned away.

"Don't see's it's my fault," Joe said. "*I* didn't make the money."

"That's right!" Grandfather said. "Ye certainly never did. *I* made it."

"Well," Joe said, "nobody ever blamed you."

Grandfather walked up and down again while cigar smoke trailed behind him. "Tell me 'xactly, Joseph, how you was expelled this time."

"Same way's every other time," Joe said.

"Ye mean—'xaminations?"

"Yeah—sure."

"But ye had a special arrangement with th' dean!"

"Well, what of it? The arrangement was for me to pass my examinations."

"Umph. Weren't ye prepared?"

"No."

"What 'xaminations didn't ye pass?"

"French, calculus, chemistry, freshman Latin, an' sophomore English."

"What *did* ye pass!"

"Logic."

"Logic!" Grandfather snorted.

"Sure. That's a gut course."

"Easy course, ye mean? It certenly must've been."

"Well I passed it anyway." Joe wandered back to the fireplace and slumped into a big chair.

"What do ye propose to do now?"

"Don't know."

"I know what I propose t' do. I've done it."

"Made your will over to Uncle Will," Joe said.

Grandfather was startled. "Did he tell ye?"

"No. But that's just the kind of thing you would do."

"Yes. It's 'xactly what I've done."

"Wasn't very logical," Joe said.

"Logic! Umph."

"But I s'pose you can leave your money anywhere you want."

"See here," Grandfather said, advancing angrily, "ye can't sit here talkin'. My feelin' is that ye've disgraced the fam'ly."

"That's your feelin'. Why can't I be entitled to mine?"

"'Cause your feelins ain't like anyone else's. Your feelins is in fact worthless. Your hand is against mankind."

Joe shrugged.

"Ye've never had to work. Ye've never faced any issue in your life. Ye ain't earned your feelins!" Grandfather shouted, drawing himself up straight. "Neither did your dad. Your dad had luck an' wimmin took to him, so he could loaf an' get away with it. You can't. So far's I can see ye've absolutely no attractions."

"That's obvious," Joe said, still slumped in his chair. "You take for granted I oughta be upset. If I was sorry for myself I'd lead a hell of a life."

Grandfather studied him a moment. "Seems to

me ye lead a hell of a life anyway." There was silence. "'Israel has cast off the thing that's good; th' enemy'll pursue him'!" Grandfather cried.

Joe arose angrily. "This is my life I'm leadin', isn't it? Tellin' me to want somethin' doesn't make me want it. I know what I want and it's somethin' else again from anythin' you want. I don't give a whoop in hell whether you've disowned me or not —get that through your head. If you want your money t' go to Uncle Will, it's your money an' nobody's goin' t' kick!"

"That's right," Grandfather said, twirling his cigar. "It's goin' to Uncle Will."

"Fine! Now let's can it."

Grandfather gathered up his majesty. "I'm goin' t' can it, Joseph, an' I'm goin' t' can it my way. It's already canned. I'm through with ye. Ye'll get no more out of me and I ain't goin' to make m'self ridikelous before no more college faculties. Uncle Will an' yer mother says ye can stay in th' house, but so far's I'm concerned ye ain't livin'. So far's I'm concerned I've no fam'ly left. I'm an ole man, nowise ready to be humiliated by such as you. I raised m'self from th' gutter"—he held his fist in the air invectively—"an' I ain't goin' to see m'self dragged back to th' gutter by m'own flesh an' blood!"

He paused, with his fist tightened before him. Joe looked up quickly to meet the fierce, inspired eyes. The old man seemed like a Hebrew prophet, and this illusion was intensified by the long coat which he always wore.

"'How art thou fall'n from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of th' mornin'! Thou'rt cast out of thy grave, like an abom'nable branch, an' as th' raiment of those that're slain, thrust through with th' sword, that go down to th' stones of th' pit; as a carcass trodden under feet. For I will rise up agen' 'em, saith th' Lord of hosts, an' cut off from Babylon th' name, an' remnant, an' son, an' nephew, saith th' Lord'!"

His voice reached its climax and then paused. Joe stood looking at the floor, working the muscles of his jaws. Grandfather dropped his hand to his side.

"I've left ye the Sixteenth Street house," he said quietly, "'cause I want it in th' family. If ye have legitimate children it'll go to them. But ye probably won't, in which case it'll go to m' sister's children in Worcester. I've left 'nough in trust to run it, but ye can't touch th' trust. 'Fact Joseph, don't see how ye're goin' to live, 'less ye get to work." They stared at each other across sixty years of life. "Maybe Willard'll give ye a job," Grandfather said.

These last words dropped quietly, like the white glove of challenge, between them. Then Grandfather turned and walked out of the room in a whiff of cigar smoke.

Where his father had been socially brilliant, Joe was merely gregarious. He knew his city, and in the course of twenty-four hours, might turn up in any number of small groups, or obscure poker clubs, where the clank of Manhattan's political machinery is heard. Joe had tutored for a year before entering Dartmouth, and during this time, living at the

Jencks house, he had done New York rather thoroughly. If he had any dominant pleasure in his life it was this mixing with thousands of acquaintances. As a kid he had played with the so-called rowdies and townies; he had never had much use for the mannered pupils of private schools, whose games are arranged for them and who are not allowed on the street. Joe's favorite diversion used to be street baseball, and he would wander from group to group along the East Side, playing hooky from school, when he was twelve. Now that he was almost nationally known as a football star, he was welcomed by those same friends in their homes and their smoky clubs.

But it happened that during that year of tutoring in New York Caroline was making her début, and dragged Joe reluctantly after her. His reluctance was a sham, because the youths of Caroline's set were no longer sheltered, as they had been at twelve. They had large flasks and ingenious, even daring ideas. He mixed with them as freely, if more silently than with his street friends; they thought him a little sour, but they considered him their property. Now that he was educated, their clubs were available to him, their resources, their liquor, and their information. This was all Joe wanted out of them. Putting the two groups together, he knew that he was the possessor of vast human resources in the city.

Shortly after his interview with Grandfather he set out for the Phaëton, where he picked up a game of bridge with two young bond salesmen, and with Phil Biddle, who was expecting a substitute berth on the all-American polo team. Everyone at the Phaëton

was glum about the stock market, which had not yet recovered from a violent decline last spring. Phil said that if it broke further he would have to sell his horses. Shaffer, one of the bond salesmen, had the theory that some great bear trader was operating secretly. His companion said that no single trader could manipulate the modern market. Phil Biddle had heard that Filmore was back. Filmore must be eighty years old, Joe Herd said, thinking of his Grandfather who was Filmore's contemporary. The manipulator, Shaffer said, would have associates and would have his hands on the money supply. People ought to buy bonds, his companion said. You can't buy bonds without money, Shaffer said.

As soon as he was dummy Joe telephoned Harry Gale. The fact that Harry was in his office as late as five o'clock was ominous. "Glad to find you back to the grind," Harry said. "Sure. I'll have dinner with you at seven. Better come down here and we'll eat in Thirty-three. So long."

Thirty-three was a brokers' club on the top of the Marcy Building, founded by Harry, whose office was on the second floor. The dining room was spacious, with mahogany pilasters, Ionic in line, and walls covered with modern tapestries picturing the history of New York City. The hundred tables and all the chairs were mahogany, and there was a mahogany bar at the pantry end of the room, with a polished brass rail at its base. Although this retreat was officially stocked with soft drinks, members of the club had their own lockers in which they could keep whatever liquor they desired. The long floor was done in

Italian tiling—deep blue relieved by brilliant yellow designs—each tile different from the other. This decoration was characteristic of Gale, whose tastes were sumptuous and who had spent his younger days on the Continent. There was the odor of cool polished wood, lemons, and oranges. You were greeted at the door by Crimmons, a very eminent maître d'hôtel, whose specialty was Oysters-in-Chafing-Dish Crimmons.

Harry was seated at a high window looking out over the restless harbor, which was now sprinkled with lights that moved mysteriously, and was bordered by blinking signs whose capital letters shot the names of America's premier products across the darkness. Harry Gale, at that table with a sheaf of special reports before him, was essentially a feudal figure, or else a Medici of the early Renaissance, and seeing him you would realize that democracy is America's form of government but not its way of life. For Harry was a member of an oligarchy—a kind of baron—and he knew the part.

Seeing Joe approach in the wake of Crimmons, he arose and extended his hand. "This is a pleasure," he said. "I wish you'd arrange to leave more universities."

Joe grunted.

"Crimmons," Harry said, "this is Mr. Herd."

"Oh of course, sir," Crimmons said. "Yes sir."

"Doesn't that mean anything at all to you, Crimmons?"

The maître d'hôtel smiled and hurried off in the direction of the bar. Joe sat down.

"Bad news from home?" Gale had a long thin nose and brown eyes that were always discovering things about people.

"Some," Joe admitted. He unfolded his napkin. Conversation was dull until the cocktails arrived.

"Fact is," Joe said, "got a new name."

"What's that?"

"Lucifer, Son of the Morning."

"Mucifer!" Harry exulted.

"Sure, Mucifer."

"What's the idea?"

"Grandfather started quoting the Bible."

"You don't mind if we make 'Mucifer' out of it?" Harry said.

"Make anything out of it you can."

"One thing I make out of it is, you don't want to believe everything that old pirate tells you," Harry said.

"Hell," Joe said, "I don't. But this time he says he's disinherited me."

Harry's eyes widened. "Fact?"

"Make what you can out of that too," Joe said.

"Where's his money going?"

"Jencks."

Harry was trying to remember something. "Listen, Mucifer," he said at last, "maybe this hasn't got anything to do with it, but three days ago Jencks put a million into his account."

"Kinda jumpin' the gun?" Joe said.

"Starting on 'Get set,'" Harry said. "If you ask me, though, he's up to something."

"He's tryin' to make himself the Henry Ford of real estate," Joe said.

"Service to those who pay for it," Harry said.

"He's goin' to begin by cuttin' a new boulevard from the northern end of Washington Street all the way up past Columbus Circle."

"Who is? Ford?"

"No you damned fool. Jencks."

Harry whistled.

"It's to be called People's Boulevard," Joe said.

"Hell," Harry said. "That kind of service is expensive."

"It's supposed to draw traffic out of the mid-mile," Joe said. "On each side of it he'll build apartments for the white-collar men in Wall Street. These're supposed to be non-profitable."

"Where'd you learn all this? Did he tell you?"

"Do you s'pose I'd be tellin' you if he had?"

Harry shrugged.

"A guy named Harmon told me—he's on the traffic committee. And I know some of the small owners around there. They're panicky."

"Is this what you studied at college?"

Joe grinned. "Wouldn't mind if I had. Matter of fact, learned it all last summer."

"How much is this going to cost?"

"'Bout sixty millions."

"At least."

"Yeah."

"Well," Harry said, "if you ask me, he's going to get stung."

"Why?"

"He's buying stocks."

"Market bad?"

"It's taking nourishment through a glass tube," Harry said.

"Maybe I better sell," Joe said. "All I've got's in your shop."

"Sell everything. Go short."

"All right. Leave it to you."

"It's Madison van Duyn," Harry said. "And keep it dark."

Joe grunted. This was the richest name in town.

"There's going to be weeping and gnashing," Harry said. "Everyone's going to weep and gnash."

The words reminded Joe of the Bible. "Funny old man, that grandfather of mine."

"Old pirate," Harry said. "Does he know about this boulevard?"

"Yeah. But he don't like it much," Joe said. "The business is gettin' out of his control."

"How about Caroline?" Harry asked.

"What 'bout her?"

"Does she like the idea of inheriting your money?"

Joe shrugged. "What if she don't?"

"She's coming out to my place to-morrow," Harry said. "You better come too."

"Sorry. Don't think I will."

"Why not?"

"Delaney's takin' her out."

Harry studied him a minute with twinkling eyes. "Funny man," he said.

"Sure. I know it."

"Anything wrong?"

"No," Joe said. "You might keep your eye on her, though."

"That's easy."

"With Delaney," Joe said. "He's a son of a bitch."

"Hell," Harry said, "leave her alone. She's got to live."

"Not with that guy." Joe thrust his head forward.

Harry stared at the lazy expression on Joe's face. Here was a mask, if Gale had ever seen one! Yet presently his thin lips lengthened themselves ironically, and his eyes, like sharp surgical instruments, reached down into Joseph Herd. "I smell complex," he said, with those ironical lips. "Mm. Nice, ripe, Freudian complex."

PART II

HARRY GALE returned to his office after dinner—he had become a slave to the nation's speculators—but Joe wandered leisurely into a small club on Fourteenth Street. This was one of the most impregnable spots in New York, so far as the police were concerned, because it was run by politicians, each one of whom had his special drag.

Joe was shaking hands with a group at the door when a man with curly yellow hair approached him warmly. "Hallo Yoe."

" 'Lo Herman." They shook hands.

"De boys bane tellin' me yasterday to look for you, Herman Niehlson said. He was an assistant accountant for the Herd Realty Finance Corporation."

"Zatso?"

Niehlson touched Joe's sleeve confidentially. "A beer, enh?"

"Sure." Joe followed him. The "club" occupied the sitting room and dining room of a former residence. It was papered a dingy gray, but made cozy by leather chairs, heavy oak poker tables, red rugs, a collection of cups, old flags, and two nineteenth century oils. Beer was served in the back room. As Niehlson led his employer's grandson thither Joe

waved his hand at a beefy man whose vigorous face indicated some importance. This was Jeff Harmon, the wholesale grocer, of whom Mr. Jencks had spoken earlier in the day. "Hi Jeff."

"Hi Joe. Where from?"

"Just outa th' incubator."

Harmon laughed and tossed a chip into his pot. Joe and Niehlson sat down at one of the smaller tables and ordered two large beers.

"How iss tricks?" Niehlson asked.

"No tricks," Joe said.

"You know how my troubles iss."

"Same thing."

"Yas."

Joe slowly shook the flame from a match.

The Swede leaned over with a confidential motion. "I tole you 'bout dat Hintereity Aviation. Yas? I tole you it bane in Yencks's books vun millions two hundert t'ousan'. Ja? Now I see it in Yencks's books t'ree hundert t'ousan' more." Nielson paused for his effect.

Joe grunted.

"Dot bane five days ago. How she go up so much you get me."

"One million five hundred thousand?"

"Ja." Niehlson hit the table with his fist. "I say notting," he said.

"Does Cary know?" Cary was the chief accountant of the Herd Realty Finance Corporation.

"Yas. Sure." Niehlson paused, then said, "Now vy do dey put a guy lak me on dese books who don't spik Eenglish?"

"You're all right, Herman."

"Ja, I'm all right. But I ain't get no more for de bookkippin' dan for crysake. You know dot, Yoe."

Joe laughed.

"Ja. It maybe iss not so funny," Niehlson said. "I ain't to be took for a crook by nobody." His fist hit the table again. "De vife, she say, 'Herman you leaf dis alone. You got a good yob,' she says. 'You larnin' much,' she says. But now look at me, Yoe." Herman put his head on one side and spread his hand. "Supposin' dis go bust. I ain't sayin' she bane busted, I say supposin' she go. De accountants vill be in troubles, you bet, and dot son of a bitch Cary should stick it on to me maybe. Ain't dot right, Yoe?"

Joe dropped the corners of his mouth. "Not likely," he said.

"But still . . ." Niehlson raised his shoulders.

"If they busted," Joe said, "I don't see how they could hold the accountants. You aren't supposed to know anything. Delaney'd be the boy that'd get it on th' neck."

"Ja. Dot's so."

"And he knows this Intercity stuff ain't worth a million and a half."

"Ja. Dot's so."

"So I don't see why you gotta worry."

"You're dem right I got to worry! Ain't I haccountant?"

Joe shrugged.

"It hurt me here," Herman said in a quieter voice. He put his hand on his chest. "I dunno, I feel funny

'bout it—'bout dot ole man your granfadder. He's square. When I bane little feller, Yoe, I tink maybe some day I show dot guy how good it bane Tanksgivings to eat turkey. When dot turkey come I bane like dis around de belly." With his big hands he indicated a circumference of six inches. "Your granfadder, he don't know 'bout dis, and I know maybe I should tell him. I do not lak see a guy lak dot ole man made monkeys of."

A distance in the Swede's blue eyes absorbed Joe for several seconds. It was hard to realize that Niehlson worshiped his grandfather. Life was many-sided. Joe washed it down with a drink of beer.

"I vish to know from you vedder I should tell him or vedder should I not," Herman said.

Intercity was a dummy corporation which Jencks was using as an indirect means of financing People's Boulevard. Since its incorporated purpose was to establish air fields throughout the country, it was empowered to own real estate. Delaney had invested its million dollars' worth of capital along the West Side, between Ninth and Tenth avenues. The stock had been almost entirely purchased by the Herd Realty Finance, and thus Grandfather had been led to invest in People's Boulevard (of which he did not approve) without his own knowledge. Intercity had one airplane, hangared at Roosevelt Field. With this single operating unit, the value of its stock, in the books of the Finance Corporation, had been raised two hundred thousand last year, and according to Niehlson, had just been raised again. The increase in value was obviously fictitious, and the bookkeeping

had certainly never originated with Grandfather, who shunned mere paper assets. Joe set down his glass and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. He saw no reason why he should interfere, since Grandfather admired the character of Willard Jencks so much.

But Herman was something of a poet, perhaps, and it so happened that when Grandfather first got religion, twenty-five years ago, he had rescued the immigrant Niehlsons from starvation through the agency of a missionary society. Grandfather had paid for Herman's education and then had put him under Cary in the office. Cary had made him chief accountant of the Intercity job. And Herman was unhappy about this.

"Vell?" Herman scrutinized Joe's unemotional face.

Joe had just asked himself the question, "What of it?" As usual, he had found no answer to this.

"Should I tell de ole feller, or should I not tell him?"

"Suit yourself, Herman." It was almost a principle with Joe to avoid the affairs of Jencks, and now that he had been disinherited this would become a sort of mania. "Don't see as it makes much difference."

"But to me it make a difference."

Joe shrugged.

"And to de ole feller it make a difference."

"Yeah." Joe reflected some more. It certainly would make a difference to Grandfather. Supposing Grandfather should discover that Jencks and Delaney had done this! Joe shrugged again.

"Vell?" Herman insisted.

"I tell you, leave it alone," Joe said.

"It vill someday be your business."

"Even if that were so," Joe said, "I don't give a damn what Jencks does with it now. I happen to know that Jencks needs capital. I don't think Jencks did this himself. I think he's drawn so much out of the finance corporation that he's caught Delaney unprepared."

"I tell de ole feller," Herman said obstinately.

"Listen," Joe said, leaning over the table more decisively, "you leave it alone. If you sock Jencks and Delaney with this, and then can't prove it, you'll lose your job."

Herman looked unhappy.

Joe said: "This kind of thing would kill the old man, Herman. If he thought Jencks was crooked he wouldn't live ten minutes."

"Do you tink?"

"If you knew as much about that outfit as I do you'd keep away from it."

Herman was studying the scarred table, but presently looked up. "It vould not kill him," he said.

Joe shrugged. "Suit yourself."

They were silent after this; and then Joe was aware of the tall figure of Justice Severn standing a little away from their table. He flapped his hand. "Hi, Bill." He sat back in his chair. "Have a drink."

The justice was tall and spare. "No thanks, Joe. Hello Herman."

"Hallo Bill."

"I was just dropping over to see a friend of mine,"

Severn said to Joe. "Thought you might like to come along."

Joe sensed reasons behind the casual statement. "Sure," he said. "Don't mind if I do."

"Soon as you and Herman have hatched all your eggs," Severn said.

"I got to go home," Herman said. "De vife, she vait for me."

"Good wife," Severn said, smiling.

"Yas," Herman said. "Got no kick vid my vife." He arose slowly.

Joe put his hand on Herman's arm. "You asked me what I thought."

"Ja. Dot's so."

"Don't ever do that again."

Herman smiled. "Dot's so. Good-night, Yoe."

"Good-night," Joe said, ambling out of the room.

A few minutes later he and Severn were walking down empty, arc-lit University Place, between the dead rows of wholesale houses, in one of those cavities of the city which make you feel that the planet has been deserted. Now and then a taxi, ornamented with red and green lights, slithered by, and whirred away into vaguer noise. They reached Raphael Tarne's apartment house, on the southwest corner of Washington Square, and were lifted to the top floor. Tarne's Japanese butler opened the penthouse door for them. If you had known Rap in his starving "dramatist" days, this palace of concrete and hardwood and blue Oriental rugs would astound you. Harry Gale was responsible for his sudden wealth. The apartment was a duplex, and had on its second

floor one large studio room which commanded the city on every side. Around it was a terrace and parapet. The walls of the studio were entirely covered with second-hand books—those same books that used to be stacked in corners, on the ice box, and around the bed of Tarne's messy room on Tenth Street. At the southern end of the studio was a desk from which the Wall Street skyscrapers could be seen. There were numerous tables, couches, leather chairs, bric-a-brac, and a blue Chinese rug with a large green flower in one corner of it. At eleven o'clock Tarne, Dr. Sam Chance, and an economist named Hobbs were sprawled around in argument, which the arrival of Severn and Joe caused them to abandon.

While Joe was being introduced to the three men the Jap poured new drinks.

"We were talking about you," Tarne said to Severn. "Hobbs said that you were wasting a good mind."

"I said," Hobbs interrupted, "that you *had* wasted a good mind."

Severn smiled. "A knowledge of the dead," he said, "gives power over the living."

"Bravo!" Tarne said. "Hobbs hasn't said anything as interesting as that for an hour."

"I always say the same thing about disease," Sam Chance said. "What we know about health originates in disease."

Joe Herd stirred in his chair. He liked this.

"Where's Van Duyn?" Severn asked Tarne.

"He ought to be here any minute. He must be working over the market."

"It was a bad day," Joe Herd said.

"If it wasn't for you, Rap, Van would go mad," Severn said.

"That's what I tell him," Tarne growled.

"You mean Madison van Duyn?" Joe asked Severn.

"Yes."

"He's very nearly mad anyway," Sam Chance said to Severn. "It's one of those Hamlet cases. You can't tell where genius ends and insanity begins."

Almost at this moment a door opened on the floor below and footsteps were heard mounting the stairs from the living room. Joe was presently surprised to see Harry Gale breezing into the room. Harry held up his hand in the Roman salute. "*Vade atque vale!*" he said, causing everyone to laugh. "We've just put over the new eighteen-hour day. Hi Rap, hi Sam!"

Behind Harry walked a man with a strong nose and fierce eyes, dressed in a disreputable pepper-and-salt topcoat that looked as if it had been worn in yesterday's rain. For some reason he had refused to give it to the Jap at the door. Brown trousers bagged around his ankles, and his black shoes were scuffed. He did not greet anyone, but walked to a leather chair into which he dropped his body with relief.

Harry was still boisterous. "Hi Bill. Well for God's sake, Mucifer!" He took Joe's hand.

"Once again," Joe said.

"This guy," Harry said, turning to Tarne, "holds fewer degrees than any university graduate in the world."

Tarne laughed. He was crossing to Van Duyn with a highball. "Have a drink, Van."

The millionaire opened his eyes and his face became softened with a smile. "Sure. Thanks Rap."

Van Duyn had not yet shown himself before the world. He was in his early twenties and could not decide what to do with the largest fortune so far inherited in America. His indecision did not lack energy, however. He had had personal experience in a dozen different industries, and he was now amusing himself on the stock market in a disruptive way. He was interested in seeing how far he could affect prices, and was organizing a vast drive for next May.

Tarne returned laboriously to his seat.

"Van!" Harry shouted. "Have you met Mucifer?"

Van Duyn had just taken his first gulp of the highball and was preparing to feel better. "Who?"

"Mucifer," Harry said. He dragged Joe over to Van Duyn's chair. "Joe Herd," he said.

Van Duyn held out a long-fingered hand without rising. "Very glad," he said. "Herd Realty Company?"

"Once upon a time," Joe said.

"He isn't a success yet," Harry said. "He's not fully developed."

Joe grunted. "Don't tell me again," he said.

"He was asking me at dinner whether he ought to sell," Harry said. "You tell him, Van."

"Sell," Van Duyn said. He fixed his eyes on Joe a moment and then turned to the group. "Who's got a cigarette?"

Sam Chance, who was sitting next to him, produced one. Harry offered a lighter.

"Made twenty-five dollars off this little friend to-day," Harry said. He flicked it into flame.

"Betting again?" Dr. Chance asked.

"No," Harry said. "Investing. Everybody trusts his own little friend."

"What do you mean, you were with the Herds once upon a time?" Van Duyn concentrated on Joe.

Joe told him.

Van Duyn said, "Um."

Hobbs began attacking Severn. Tarne strolled across the room and let his two hundred pounds sink into a Morris chair beside Van Duyn.

"I want to know," Van Duyn said to Joe, "what that man Jencks is up to. I suppose you're not in touch with that."

"Depends," Joe said. "What d'you want to know for?"

"Well, about six months ago Jencks came to see me about buying the warehouse of National Garden Foods. You know where that is."

"No," Joe said, "but I'll bet it's between Ninth and Tenth avenues."

Van Duyn looked at him shrewdly. "Right," he said. "I asked him what he wanted it for. He said he just wanted property in that region. I told him there was plenty to be had without tearing up National Garden. He said, Yes. But I could see he wanted this particular piece. So I told him nothing doing. I don't like the way these real-estate fellows creep around you without letting you know their plans. Later

he came back. He said he was building a community apartment scheme around there—for the poor"—Van Duyn shifted in his seat—"and he wanted a right of way through our building, like those under the Municipal and New York Central buildings. That sounded fishy too. So I turned that down too." He swallowed several gulps of his highball.

"It'll be a community for the poor all right," Joe said, "if Jencks fixes th' rents." He turned away casually to get a chair. Tarne grunted and stirred. Joe's self-possession was always impressive.

"That sounds like a yarn," Dr. Chance said. "Tell us about Jencks."

"Well," Joe said, returning with a straight chair, "I haven't got the gift of gab, and what Jencks does isn't my business anyway."

"That wouldn't spoil the story," Tarne said—"the fact that it isn't your business. We're a queer bunch up here, Herd. We consider everything our business."

"You must be awful busy," Joe said, sitting down lazily.

"On the contrary," Tarne said.

"If you talk enough," Harry Gale said, "you never have to do anything." He was sitting on the arm of Tarne's Morris chair.

"That epigram," Van Duyn said, "ought to go on Gale and Townshend's letterhead."

"Your letterhead," Harry said, "ought to be, 'I don't even talk.'"

Tarne said to Joe: "Who is Jencks?"

"He's my grandfather's partner," Joe said.

"Listen," Harry said, "that's not an answer. Liquify yourself a little."

"Is this an inquisition?" Joe asked.

"Not at all." Van Duyn leaned forward in his chair. "You'll have to pardon us, Herd, if we seem inquisitive. We meet here almost every night and we're so used to asking impertinent questions of one another that I suppose we forget our manners. There's no formal organization of us, but still I think we're distinguishable from general society, if only because we like to amuse each other with what is not mentionable in general society." He sat back again.

Joe pushed his lips forward and grunted. Van Duyn's statement contained an invitation, if he wanted to take it that way, and he was flattered by this. Yet he disliked flattery and therefore remained silent. After a pause he arose and crossed deliberately, with his head thrust forward, to the whisky and soda.

Tarne said: "It's a peculiar fact, Van, that the dozen or so persons who come here in the evening have scarcely needed any introduction to each other. It must be that each of us has gone through the same ordeal, in some disguise, and has come out of it with one answer. I don't mean that the answer's a definite one. I think it's no more than an attitude, but recognizable, and communicated without words, the way animals communicate with each other."

Joe stopped pouring his highball and looked up. "Maybe you recognize that attitude in me," he said.

"Yes," Tarne said, "I think I do.

"That's fair enough," Joe said, "because I feel

somethin' like that about you." He returned to his highball and finished pouring it.

Dr. Chance said, "It's a process of uninhibiting."

"You seem to have gotten off the subject of Jencks," Van Duyn said.

"Jencks?" Joe said. "That's a hell of a subject for conversation. Rather talk about Harry."

"They've talked about me already," Harry said. "They've exploited me."

"What I want to know," Van Duyn said, "is how Jencks got to be so powerful. He seems to me like a sap."

"He's got Grandfather's money behind him," Joe said. "Jencks is a dream-boy. He'll step into anything, and get away with it, because he don't know enough to get scared."

"That's a form of greatness in itself," Van Duyn said.

"Blah," Joe said.

"But now that's a good line of advertising he's running."

"You mean those 'Human Shelter' ads," Joe said.

"The history of housing conditions," Van Duyn said. "It'll make him a national figure if he keeps it up."

"How the caveman cavered," Harry said.

"You mean those pictures of mediæval Paris?" Tarne asked.

"Set beside modern Herd elevator apartments, yeah," Joe said. "And the comparative costs of homes in different ages measured in bushels of wheat. All that stuff. Uncle Will has to hear himself talk."

"Has he rectified those bushels of wheat as a standard of measurement?" Hobbs asked. "If he hasn't, it's a gag."

"It's a gag anyway," Joe said. "The motto of it is 'Serve and Refrain.'"

Tarne rumbled and chewed his pipe stem.

Van Duyn leaned forward. "Why did he want a right of way through my warehouse?"

"That's kind of a long story," Joe said.

Harry Gale remembered. "That's what you were talking about at lunch, isn't it?"

"Yeah," Joe said. He looked around him almost suspiciously. What did they want to know about this for?

Harry had turned to Van Duyn. "It's a new avenue, a regular trunk line up the West Side," he said.

"Is this a fact?" Van Duyn asked Joe.

"Say Bill," Joe called to Severn across the room, "Did you bring me up here so's these guys could pump me?"

Severn smiled. "Are they asking impertinent questions?" he said. "No. I brought you up so's you could pump them. They know a lot."

"Haven't had a chance," Joe said with a grin.

"We're not going to take advantage of anything at all," Van Duyn said. "Except I'd like to know whether to sell that warehouse."

"Don't sell it," Joe said. "When Jencks wants it bad enough his price'll go up." He launched himself. "You see, he wants to cut a boulevard from Washington Street at Thirteenth to Broadway at Sixty-eighth. It's a strip 'bout two and a half miles long and three

hundred feet wide, which gives him room for two rows of six-story elevators, which he'll rent on what he calls a non-profit basis, which means that at sixteen or seventeen bucks a room he'll make a few millions."

The atmosphere of the room sustained Joe and made indiscretion seem natural. He enjoyed the explosive effect of his words.

"Good God!" Van Duyn said. "This would be the biggest thing of its kind in years."

"Sure it would," Joe said. "That's why he's doin' it."

"Has he started buying?"

"He owns eighty per cent. already."

Van Duyn hissed and looked up at the ceiling. Hobbs wanted to know the valuations.

"It's assessed for about forty-two million," Joe said. "Jencks figures on payin' between fifty and fifty-five."

"Then there's all the building," Van Duyn said.

"Well," Joe said, "I never figured out how much that'd cost, but I know it won't cost as much as Jencks says it will. He figures the whole thing—all improvements, sewage, everything—will come to a hundred and fifty million."

"But then it is non-profitable!" Van Duyn cried. "He'll never get enough rent to cover that. How many apartments will he put up?"

"He's got a hundred and sixty-seven building plots ten thousand foot square," Joe said. "But I don't know what th' rent from them would amount to. That isn't th' point. Now that I got started on this

you might let me go ahead and not ask so many questions."

Tarne chewed his pipe again.

"That estimate of a hundred and fifty million is fake," Joe said. "There's two ideas bound up in this thing. When Jencks first started it he figured on buildin' th' whole thing himself, with th' Herd Finance and th' Herd Construction Company. Doin' it that way, he could put up everything for a hundred and eight million, and he had some amortization scheme figured out which would pay him back his total investment in forty-six years. His profit in that case would come in th' increased value of th' property, which right now is under-developed and isn't worth much. But m' grandfather didn't like th' idea much; and besides that, there're some properties belongin' to th' city, and others belongin' to th' Keystone Railroad, and so on, that can't be bought privately; and half a boulevard is worse than no boulevard at all. So Jencks has been workin' down at City Hall, tryin' to get them t' take the property he's already collected off his hands, and he's askin' something like eighty million for the whole strip, minus those pieces he can't buy privately. If he gets that price there's a profit of twenty-five million or so in it for him. 'Course he throws in th' plans and surveys and th' general idea. His argument is that it'd cost th' city sixty-five million to get th' whole strip by condemnation, and that th' idear is worth ten or fifteen million more politically."

"He's kept it dark," Van Duyn said.

"He's got to," Joe said, "or he couldn't buy. He's

got forty corporations with fancy names buyin' for him, and one holdin' corporation that owns all th' others."

"What's that called?"

"None of your business," Joe said.

"That's right," Tarne said quietly. "We don't need to know the name of that."

"It's a damned good idea," Joe said. "And even with the hundred and fifty million estimate, th' city could pay off its investment in fifty or sixty years."

"Is your grandfather in this too?" Harry Gale asked.

"Hell," Joe said. "Grandfather wouldn't go into a thing like that if you paid him cash profits in advance. Th' financin's too complicated." He paused. "But just the same," he said, "Grandfather's in it, though he don't know it himself. Jencks isn't crooked exactly, but he thinks around corners kind of, and he's got some crooks workin' for him besides. They've got Grandfather's money in this all right, one way or 'nother. I was just talkin' to th' accountant of a fishy firm of theirs to-night; Grandfather owns stock in the corporation and th' corporation owns land on the boulevard. Then all th' directors of Keystone and other big concerns around there are mixed up in it. It's a hell of a snarl. Shouldn't be surprised if some of your National Garden directors were in it, Van Duyn."

"If they are," Van Duyn snapped, "one of 'em is named Packer."

"That's right," Joe said. "I've heard that name."

Van Duyn threw his head back again and stared

at the ceiling. Harry Gale had fixed surprised eyes on Joe; for he had never heard Joe talk like this, or evince any interest in the facts of his uncle's business. Sam Chance scratched his head. Tarne chewed his pipe. Severn, who had stopped his argument with Hobbs and who had brought Joe into the group, looked pleased and fatherly. Hobbs was concentrating on the figures.

"How in hell did you learn it all?" Harry asked.

"I got ears."

"You ought to work for the government."

"I never talked like this before," Joe said. "You all seemed interested, so I did. I got nothin' 'gainst Uncle Will, 'cept he talks too much. I'm figurin' that none of you will make trouble for him."

"Why this whole thing ought to be done municipally!" Hobbs cried, rising. He had an extraordinarily ugly face, flattened out in front, and his nose was crooked. All his personality was in dark statistical eyes. "Jencks himself will have to admit that."

"I don't agree with you," Van Duyn said, holding his half-emptied glass. "If the city ever started to buy a complicated property like that it would cost 'em a hundred million."

"That's not so," Hobbs said. "And it'll cost 'em eighty million to buy it from Jencks."

"Condemnation is expensive," Van Duyn said. "And besides, whenever a municipal corporation undertakes anything you can multiply the estimates of a private corporation by two."

"Last time," Hobbs cried, "we agreed on the figure three over two."

"Since when," Van Duyn said, "I've read some figures on the Seattle street railways that'd make you sick."

"Those railways are exceptional," Hobbs said. "There was a lot of graft."

"Graft has always been the exception in New York, I admit," Van Duyn said drily. He arose violently. "Why, this is a magnificent conception! Don't you see what Jencks ought to do?" He turned to Joe. "He ought to get a franchise to run a street! It's just like running a traction company, isn't it? Turn the thing over to the city in return for a ninety-nine-year lease. Put up the apartments. Pay back the investment with a sinking fund. At the expiration of the lease, get a new one, or not; it wouldn't matter. The investment is paid. Why we could have trunk lines through the city that way; some for trucks; some for private cars; competing with each other. That would put pep into things. By God! All you'd need would be a little special legislation to lay a right-of-way. Jencks is an ass if he doesn't do it!" He stopped abruptly, realizing that he was being carried away by one of his enthusiasms.

"Jencks is an ass anyway," Joe mumbled, pricking Van Duyn's bubble.

"It would be so much simpler," Hobbs said, "to let the city do it."

"Hobbs," Van Duyn said, returning to his chair, "you argue by reiteration."

"Here now," Tarne said. "We've had enough of your private-ownership ideas for awhile, Van."

"Just the same," Van Duyn said to Hobbs, "you'd better drop in a some day and read those reports from Seattle."

That same night, a few hours before dawn, Joe slipped his key into the front door of the Jencks house, while the shiny Gale limousine gathered speed up empty Park Avenue. He entered, took off his coat and hat, and loafed out through the dining room toward the pantry. There was a light beyond the swinging door. Pushing open the door, he was in the sudden presence of Caroline, perched on the drain board of the pantry sink and staring morosely at the opposite wall. As Joe appeared she started and held her hand to her breast.

"Oh Lord!" she said.

"'Lo Cal."

"I thought you were a ghost."

"Feel like one." He crossed, with that queer gait of his, bending his knees, to the cake box, which he opened with a bang.

Caroline was not yet fully recovered from her fright.

Joe found a chocolate cake and got a knife out of the drawer. Then he disappeared into the dark kitchen on his way to the ice box.

Caroline sat staring at the chocolate cake.

Joe returned presently with the remains of a cold chicken, a bowl of mayonnaise, and a bottle of ginger ale. He set all these on the broad shelf below the cupboard. Putting one hand on the breast of the chicken

and seizing the drumstick with the other, he tore off a whole side of the bird with a dramatic motion. This he offered to Caroline.

"No thanks," she said.

"Not hungry eh?" Holding up the quarter-chicken by its drum stick he dug his teeth into the second joint.

"Why do you feel like a ghost?" Caroline asked.

Joe reached for a bottle-opener, applied it to the bottle with one hand, and allowed the foam to shoot safely toward the rear of the cupboard. "Why not?"

"That's no answer," Caroline said.

"Don't want to answer." He took up a glass, and still operating with one hand, poured the ginger ale skillfully. The other hand controlled the chicken.

"Sometimes," Caroline said, "you make me sick."

"Glad I don't make you sick all the time."

She swung her silken legs. From above, the pantry light glossed her brown hair, her green evening dress. "I wish I knew what you do every night," she said. "It's inconceivable."

"Sit around," he said.

"Where?"

He motioned behind him with the chicken.

"I suppose you think that's funny."

"Never said it was. You asked me where it was."

"It's inconceivable," Caroline said again. "Do you drink?"

"Sure."

"Do you go around with women?"

"Not if I can help it."

"You do know a lot of women."

"Some."

"Do you like them?"

"No."

"What're they like?"

"Never noticed 'em."

This caused silence. Caroline looked unhappy.

"Most of th' time I'm with men," Joe offered.

"What do you all do?"

"Talk."

"You never say three words in succession at home."

"Never asked to," he said.

Caroline sighed. "You don't seem to understand the family at all, Joe. They want you to talk."

He stopped chewing a moment, and said, "Just gathered around waitin' for th' wave-length."

"I mean," she said, "you make them nervous when you keep everything secret. They'd like you to be human."

"So's they could pick on me," he said. "Have some ginger ale, Cal. This brand is aged in wood."

Her long, thin fingers took the glass from his chubby ones. There was much she wanted to talk to Joe about, if he would let her. But every time she entered one room of his mind he walked away into another one. His mind would never sit down by the fire with her. Was it because she was a girl? Or was it because she was a Jencks? She felt that she was too much like her father, and that this was why Joe would share no confidence with her. Like Willard Jencks, she had no finesse, and she had all of his conservatism and fear of public disapproval. She

observed these qualities in herself somewhat dispassionately, and yet they troubled her because they deprived her of Joe.

Caroline wanted to be more like her mother, who was never mentioned in the Jencks family, and who was supposed to be a loose and immoral woman. Sophia Cox had figured in one of the worst scandals of the Church, when Caroline was three years old; had been deprived of her daughter by the courts, and had since lived in Europe. Once, when Caroline was ten, Sophia had actually kidnapped her for twenty-four hours, etching on the girl's mind the image of a pale, graceful woman with dark eyes and long jet-black hair; and also her mother's words, "I am your real mother. I am not a bad woman; and when you grow old enough to choose your friends you will come to me, and I will give you everything that I have." The idea, if not the words, remained with Caroline for years; and although the kidnaping was kept secret by Mr. Jencks, it made her feel herself to be different, more mysterious than other girls. There had always been, in the back of her mind, this idea of a fairy godmother who had promised to give her all she had. At the same time, Mr. Jencks and Diana persuaded her that her mother was really evil and an outcast from society. Consequently, when Sophia Cox returned to New York and Caroline went to see her, she went secretly, with a feeling of excitement, of an almost sexual curiosity, exploring the sources of herself in the same mood that tempts children into darkened rooms with each other. Because of this attitude of illicit curiosity, no sound

relationship grew up between her and her mother, during the year when Caroline was making her début, when she had little time for visiting. But the next year, while Joe was at Dartmouth, she suddenly discovered her mother's suffering and her frustrated love. Sophia never indicated to Caroline that the single purpose of her life was to win her daughter back, but Caroline now began to understand this. A profound intimacy knit them for a few months, until, in one of her unreasonable turns, Sophia left for Europe without explanation. Her mother's weekly letter from Paris granted Caroline nothing more than the faint suggestion that her removal to France had been for the sake of a former lover, who had become her husband some years ago.

Caroline needed her mother now, because her mind was reaching out to new conceptions that she had never permitted herself before. She knew that Sophia had grasped the realities of the emotional world; that Diana, if she had grasped them at all, would not trouble to communicate them; that, failing these two women, no man could help her. She knew that because he was a man Joe was powerless, and yet she wanted his power. Lacking it, she had evolved an absurd plan for herself; she thought that she would work the Jencks out of her nature, live it out, by adopting a kind of life which would scandalize her father. Under this influence she wanted to become someone's mistress. Whose? The desire was quaintly devoid of any specific personality. It was a desire for a condition, not for a man; and she had need of an older woman to tell her what was involved in becom-

ing a mistress. She could not solve the question herself because it was abstract rather than concrete. She wanted to ask Sophia Cox. She had tried to write it out in a letter, but the idea became cold in words. While Joe ate his chicken her mind was involved in all of this. Dreaming, she allowed the glass in her hand to tilt.

"You're goin' t' spill that ginger ale, Sis," he said.

She righted the glass. She would have been shocked to know how deeply he could see into her, how subtle his mind was, behind its lazy mask. She did not realize how much she cared for him, because her feeling had been suppressed so long that she did not figure it when planning out her days. It had dropped from the balance sheet into the fundamental conditions of livelihood. As an office worker suppresses his love for fences and apple trees, so she loved Joe in some far-off vacation beyond the grave. This had been so since she was twelve. Whenever she tried to communicate it to him he would offer her ginger ale. . . .

"What's the matter with you this evening?"

She stirred. While wondering about herself she felt that she had really been wondering about him. For instance, why did he dislike Delaney? Had they loved the same woman? Useless to ask.

"Oh nothing," she said.

Joe shrugged. He was not one to pry into secrets.

"I wish I were in love with something," Caroline said.

He snorted. "Just lookin' for trouble."

"No," she said. "But I'm bored. I wish you'd tell me why you aren't bored."

"I am bored."

"No you're not."

"Yes I am."

"No you're not."

"Don't let's play that game."

She was smiling now. "Remember when we used to?" she said. "Remember when I teased you about Sally?"

"Hunh."

"You did fall for Sally."

"Sally fell for me," he said. He laid the chicken bone aside, cut himself a slice of cake, stuffed his mouth with it.

She decided not to question his masculine ascendency over Sally, because, just as soon as he had finished the cake, she wanted to tell him that she was going to live with some man. Not in those words, of course. She would say first, "Joe, do you think it's wrong for a girl to live with a man?" or better, perhaps, "Have you ever lived with a woman?" The answer to this latter question would be in the affirmative, and that would make the discussion more thorough. The cake vanished quickly. Her heart beat faster. The silence around her was brittle, difficult to break.

"Through with the ginger ale, Cal?"

"Oh—why yes." She extended her hand. She was left without the ginger ale now. How could she speak?

He washed the cake down with three big gulps. Then he sighed and set the glass on the shelf with a bang. "Feel better."

"I'm glad." She realized immediately that the

words were silly. She dropped her eyes. She cleared her throat, looking down at her silken ankles.

"Come on," Joe said. "Bedtime."

Caroline cleared her throat again. She could feel the blood in her cheeks, and it was crowding her mind. "You know, Joe," she said, without expecting to say this at all, "I was jealous of Sally."

It was such an awkward thing to say!

He stopped at the swinging door and looked at her in amazement. The silence between them hung heavily, like wire between poles along the roadside. Messages ran along this heavy silence, but neither of them caught the words. Joe broke the wire.

"Hell," he said, "that's ancient history, Cal." He seemed to repent his words almost immediately, and was yet too proud to take them back.

"Yes," she whispered, feeling his wide green eyes concentrated on her lashes and lids.

"What's the use of diggin' all that up?" he continued.

Caroline jumped off of the drain board lightly, tossing her head a little. "Bedtime, Josey," she said.

The next morning, according to schedule, Grandfather stepped from the elevator of the new Herd Building on East Forty-second Street and walked determinedly into the offices of the Herd Realty Company. The ambition of Willard Jencks had erected this thirty-five story building, with Oriental lobby, automatic elevators, and deceptive steel paneling. The Herd Realty Company and its adjuncts occupied two floors of it, the decoration of

which was neo-Babylonian. Grandfather did not like the offices and disapproved of the decoration; but he had put his signature to both of them, after a family argument by which Uncle Will proved that the use of Babylonian designs did not involve the adoption of that heathen religion. The point was that the depiction of those gods in a place of business was a direct denial of their sacred character. Grandfather now hurried through neo-Babylon, as yet empty of employees, into his own paneled sanctuary. Mr. Jencks, generalissimo of finance and theory, controlled the western side; toward the east, Grandfather attended to more practical details—details which meant "real estate" as he knew it—and interviewed the important customers as a mark of courtesy. Grandfather had some old properties that he would allow no one to handle but himself. He collected the rent from them, improved them, sold them. The finances of his operations were simple, based upon the timeless principle of the mortgage. The Jencks properties, on the other hand, were managed by a vast organization, for which Jencks merely pressed the buttons, and its financing was done with stocks and bonded indebtedness.

When I speak of the Jencks properties I do not mean that Mr. Jencks owned them (although he did have a considerable private fortune); but almost from the day of his arrival in the H.R. there had grown up a distinction between Jencks's idea of a good property and his employer's idea. Grandfather had allowed Willard to make a few speculations, and as these proved successful Jencks was entrusted with

more. When the manager anticipated the prosperity of Fifty-seventh Street, and bought all the property he could along this little Fifth Avenue, Grandfather had to admit that he owed a good half of his fortune to him. At this point he took Jencks into partnership (he would have nothing to do with corporations) and gave him a free hand over all properties except those that were specifically denominated "Herd." Almost immediately the business became pretentious. The Herd Construction Company was created, to erect Herd improvements on Herd properties; a brokerage firm known as Herd & Jencks; and the Herd Finance Corporation, of which Delaney was president, and which Mr. Jencks was now using as a base for his operations on People's Boulevard. Later, Mr. Jencks organized People's Development Corporation, capitalized at fifty million and known to stock exchange traders as P.D.Q. It was with this corporation that he made his immense profits on Fifty-seventh Street. Its 900,000 shares outstanding had climbed to seventy-five last year. Mr. Jencks then began taking profits on Fifty-seventh Street and investing in boulevard properties. In a financial readjustment he converted P.D.Q. into a virtual holding corporation for forty small corporations which he had organized up and down the length of the boulevard strip. In the decline last spring P.D.Q. had been driven down to thirty, and had now recovered to fifty. The Herd Realty Company owned 110,000 shares; Mr. Jencks owned 300,000, by no means all of them outright, and John Delaney owned 50,000. Thus, through Delaney and Grandfather, Mr. Jencks was dictator of People's

Development. Grandfather did not approve of the corporation. His favorite properties yielded unspectacular incomes, and he owned many tenements on the upper East Side which he was selling very gradually to apartment-house syndicates. While he had secretly learned to trust Mr. Jencks, I don't think he ever openly predicted anything for him but ruin.

On this particular morning Grandfather had been at work at his big desk for two hours, when Miss Snell announced that Herman Niehlson, an accountant in the Herd Finance Corporation, wanted to see him. Grandfather was pleased. He liked Niehlson and he liked to keep in touch with every department. Lately he had been haunted by the feeling that the business was getting out of his control, and this was the true cause of his bitterness against Joe, and of those violent Biblical quotations yesterday afternoon. He did not understand the operations of three quarters of the Herd interests, and he felt that Joe should have been helping him to understand them. He had recently taken to giving small bonuses to the younger employees for the privilege of asking them questions. While waiting for Niehlson he figured the bonus and prepared the questions. He also tried to figure out what Niehlson wanted to see him about.

"Hello young man. Sit down."

The Swede crossed respectfully to a chair beside the old millionaire's desk. He carried a large account book under his arm.

Grandfather waited until he was seated. "Subway crowded this morning?"

"Yas," Herman said. "Yost lak always." He

cleared his throat. "De vife she sen' her vish," he said awkwardly.

Grandfather smiled. This was a wind-up. "That's very kind of her," he said. "You'll give her mine, Herman." He remembered a heavy blonde whom Herman had towed into the office seven or eight years before.

"Yas sir." The Swede paused. "Little Oscar, he sen' you his love also."

"Thank you," Grandfather said. "How old's he now, Herman?"

"Seven. He goes eight nex' month. He is third yahr already in school."

"Bright kid, eh?"

"Yas sir." Herman paused again and cleared his throat. "Meester Herd, I come to you from troubles."

Grandfather began estimating how much he would lend Herman.

"You see," Herman said, starting his ship down the ways with a Herculean shove (he could not forget Joe's warning of last night), "I am trouble 'bout somet'ing in de books."

There was that ominous book on Herman's lap "Something you don't understand, Herman?"

"Yas sir."

"What is it?" The old man was aggressive now.

"You must onderstand, Mr. Herd," Herman said, "dot I make trouble for nobody. It is because of vat I tink 'bout you, Mr. Herd, dot I tole you dis. I have ask your gran'son Yoe, and he say, 'Leaf it alone.' De vife she say too, 'Leaf it alone, Herman,' But I

cannot, Mr. Herd. I have t'ought long, long time 'bout dis——"

Grandfather hit the table with his fist. "Spit it out, man! Don't keep me waitin'!"

"Ja. Dot's so." Herman licked his lips. "Vell, Mr. Herd, dere is a antry in de books of de Finance Corporation dot I do not onderstand. I go it through for you from beginning. . . ."

As the story proceeded, illustrated from the journal of Intercity Aviation, Grandfather sat farther forward in his chair. He grabbed a cigar from the table and began chewing it. He tried not to allow Niehlson to see his excitement, controlling his face by a distinct muscular effort. The blood beat up against his stiff skin painfully. He was in a trap—Niehlson's trap, Jencks's trap, somebody's trap. Had Joe put Niehlson up to this? He burst into the story. "Don't understand," he said. "Don't understand at all! Cary told me he wanted ye in th' Finance Corporation."

"Ja. Dot's so."

"But now, ye say, ye're accountant fer this flyin' machine?"

"Yas sir. I bane never in de Finance Corporation. I bane always in Hintercity."

"But ye work in this office?"

"Yas sir. Dot's so."

"Ye're workin' for me!"

"Yas, for you. Dot's so."

"Dammit!" Grandfather hit the table again. "Never heard of this shebang!" He pushed a button. From Miss Snell he demanded, in a smothered voice, the quarterly statement of the Herd Realty Finance.

Intercity Aviation? He called up his broker. "Felting, did ye ever hear of a firm named Intercity Aviation?"

"Inter*city* Aviation? No, I haven't."

"Neither've I!"

"Well?"

"Look it up for me."

"All right, Herd."

"Confidential," Grandfather said.

"All right."

When the statement was set before him Grandfather seized it with one hand and struggled into his reading spectacles with the other. His eyes hurried down the asset column. Nothing in this smooth, hypocritical compilation indicated the existence of Intercity Aviation. An entry for $4,553,000 was entitled "Capital Investments." Babylon was no more rotten than this kind of bookkeeping! The image of the Babylonian frieze around the outer office flashed through Grandfather's brain and caused the blood to rush into his head dangerously. He was used to crooked business. He had made his way through the Nineties, the Eighties, a part of the Seventies. But in those buccaneering times no one pretended to print an honest balance sheet, no one talked about Service. He pushed his button. "Books of th' finance corporation!" he shouted at Miss Snell. Then he made another effort to control those old powerful energies by which he had knocked and hewn his way from the gutter to a throne. He would not let Niehlson believe that the story was possibly true.

But the Swede knew that it was true. He had struggled through too many hours of meditation, he

had looked too carefully into the books of his friend Goodman, to be fooled now. He had estimated Jencks and Delaney and was certain that they were not incapable of this. Herman's active mind was crude, but his passive mind was impressionable and subtle. Grandfather had far better put the tortuous books aside, and put up his telephone; for they will both confirm Niehlson's story, but coldly confirm it, and without pity. The decision of fate will come more gently from the sentimental blue eyes. On Herman's face Grandfather will find a more benevolent inevitability than in the squeaking black receiver on his desk.

Herman was sweating. He was handling dynamite, which is no kind of a commodity for a man with a wife and two kids to play with, even out of sentiment. "You vill onderstand, Mr. Herd——"

"Yes, confound it!"

The telephone buzzed. Grandfather seized it.

"Mr. Felting on the wire, sir," his operator said.

"Well, connect him!"

"Hello, Herd?"

"Yes Felting."

"Concerning that Intercity stock, you have no idea what exchange it's listed on?"

"Why d'ye ask me? I'm askin' you."

"Yes I know. But it's not on the Big Board, nor the Curb, nor the Produce, and I can't find it over the counter."

"It ain't, hey?"

"It'll be difficult to run down. I'll put a man on it right away if you want, but it'll take some time."

"Ye've never heard of it before?"

"No. I've never heard of it. I imagine it's some obscure subsidiary of one of the big airplane concerns. How long've you been interested in it?"

"'Bout five minutes!"

"Um. I shouldn't advise making any commitments in aviation just at present. Unless, of course, it's something special. I certainly wouldn't go it blind."

"Neither would I!" Grandfather shouted. "But you run this down fer me anyway, and keep her under yer hat."

"All right Herd."

The old man looked at his Swede and the Swede looked back at him. Grandfather suddenly perceived inevitability in Herman's face. Jehovah in Herman's face—the jealous God. Grandfather's stomach began to crowd his mind. He swallowed his saliva in gulps. His heart raced. He clutched the arms of his chair with his old fingers. "Why didn't ye—tell me 'bout —before?" he gasped. His head whirled.

"I must be sure," Herman said. "I would not be good frien' to you, Mr. Herd, if I tole you wrong."

At this moment Miss Snell opened the door, and behind her a clerk wheeled in a small steel wagon on which were set the books of Jencks's Finance Corporation. The old man watched them approach, as one sees the approach of a specter in a nightmare—great leprous volumes on whose contagious spots this immigrant Swede could put accusing fingers. Filthy disease, filthy finance! Yet it was the wagon that affected Grandfather most violently. That wagon

meant madness. It symbolized Jencks. It was Jencks's idealism advancing on him like an hallucinatory animal. Not another revolution of its rubber-tired wheels! Not an inch!

"Stop!" He arose from his chair gauntly. He held one hand between himself and the wagon. His body was hulked forward, and his power at that moment, like his grandson's power, was concentrated at the back of his neck. "Take them books off'n that contraption!"

The miserable girl obeyed. With the assistance of the clerk she lifted the books from the transfer table to the mahogany desk. The old man stood motionless. When she was finished he waved her, the clerk, and the table out of his sight.

He turned to Herman. "Show 'em," he said in a sepulchral voice.

Herman jumped. It was the kind of voice you expect to hear in a graveyard on a misty night. The Swede was sweating and his hands were trembling. He chose the proper ledger, flapped it open, turned a few pages hurriedly—back and forth —this one, that one—there. He pointed with his forefinger to the first appearance of Intercity Aviation as a capital investment. He turned the book so that the old man could see it. Grandfather leaned forward and peered through his glasses, which sat at an angle on the bridge of his nose. Then he straightened up and with his eyes signaled Herman for more. Neither of them had the courage to speak. They did not realize what they feared and yet they could not utter any words. They proceeded thus from entry to entry, the old

man standing in front of his chair, which he had shoved away sidewise, and bending forward each time Herman pointed; Niehlson huddled over the other side of the desk, afraid to come closer, deliberately turning the ledger around as each entry was uncovered. When they came to the end, the million five hundred thousand, they stood staring at each other across the opened tome.

Herd was not exactly looking at Niehlson, though his eyes had chosen Niehlson's as a rock on which to steady themselves temporarily. Actually, Grandfather was looking through the Swede, into the outlying regions of these Jencks-Delaney entries. He had noticed the last date, which was three days after he had told Jencks about his new will. What kind of a response to his generosity was this fictitious increase of the asset value of a security purchased in secret? He had told Willard in so many words that he and Diana would inherit the bulk of his fortune. A small part of it would go to the Herds of Worcester. Nothing was left to Joe.

Grandfather had come to love the Herd Realty as an evidence of something in life more lasting than flesh. His mind depended on the concept of its eternality. Willard Jencks, whom he had trained, who was as dependent on the Herd Realty as himself, who worshiped it as much as he did, would cherish it, extend its power, captain it across the uncharted years that lay beyond the old man's grave. Joe would have been incapable of this, but Willard deserved the trust. Willard was a plain fellow with a vast ideal. . . .

Or so it had seemed. Now, in sudden clarity, the

old man discovered the Jencks ego and felt the flimsiness of it. Even if this entry was genuine, it was flimsy. He learned something of what his grandson had always known about Uncle Will. At the same time he realized that his brain had not been clear for the past several years. Once he had known men and property. Now he was often mistaken about property—he had been proved mistaken—along upper Fifth Avenue—on the East River—in those Fifty-seventh Street deals. The city moved too fast, and he could not grasp modern property values. Was it possible that he did not understand modern men? Was it possible that you were not to believe what modern idealists said? Why of course! The fact of this new clarity proved that all before it had been murky. He had been listening to Willard Jencks with cotton in his ears. The man was a pirate sailing under a Christian flag. The man was like all the sniffling men that Grandfather had wrung by their financial necks. And he had left this man fifty million dollars!

All this he saw beyond Niehlson's eyes. Behind Niehlson, at the other end of the office, a little black safe squatted against the wall. In it lay the will, the bridge over which, in a few moments now—yes, in a few whirling moments it was coming—his fortune would cross, from the territory of Herd to the territory of Jencks. Like a thief it would cross, noiselessly, and there was no policeman insubstantial enough to stop it. Destroy the bridge! Burn it! Scrap it! The old man lunged around the desk. Niehlson, who thought he was being attacked, stepped away. Herd paid no attention to him. He tottered, with his body

forward and his hands clutching, as if for the moon, across the room. It was a long way. It was miles. His head felt expanded to the size of the earth. Twenty-five thousand miles around his head! His ears were ringing. His heart, as if loaded with strychnine, beat with a sharp muscular acceleration, then skipped—galloped—stopped—beat again——

Halfway across the room he realized that he was alone. Niehlson was behind him, but what did Niehlson know about grandsons and adopted sons? Poor Niehlson! If he could get to that safe he would make over his fortune to Niehlson. Some day, then, Niehlson would have to decide where to leave fifty million dollars. Poor Niehlson! For there was no one worthy of the Herd Realty Company. There was no one worthy of receiving what Joseph Herd had to leave behind him. There was no one worthy of eternity. He was alone because there were no hands into which he could place the chalice of his energies—the chalice of eighty-seven years of energy—the accumulations of victory, the stamp of an immortal will.

The heart accelerated—accelerated—skipped—galloped—stopped. The heart stopped.

Herman stared at the figure of the old man as he saw it lunge, face downward, onto the carpet. It was several seconds before he realized how motionless it lay. "Meester Herd!" He shoved his sweaty face forward. Then he jumped forward. He reached the body. He put his hands under the limp, massive shoulders. "My God . . . Meester Herd . . . I kill him. Meester Herd. Oh you fool, you fool!"

The last words were addressed, perhaps, to God. The Swede grunted, lifting the dead weight. He stood in the center of the room holding it by its armpits. The arms stuck out on either side and the jaw flopped open. Herman looked around helplessly. Having lifted it, he did not know what to do with it. Fifteen minutes later, when Miss Snell entered the office, she found him sitting on the floor, with Grandfather's head pulled up on his lap, bending over the head, sobbing.

There was the body of Grandfather stretched out and staring up at the ceiling with a wound on the forehead. There was Niehlson half sitting on the mahogany desk, blinking and sullen, with the stain of tears on his cheeks. At the door of the office a dozen clerks and secretaries stared at Niehlson and the dead man. Thus they awaited the police. Two of the clerks pushed themselves out of the crowd.

"You're not gonna try to get away, are ya?" one of them shouted. They looked at each other and then advanced. Since he took no notice of them, they collared him and held his arms.

There was a great stir at the doorway.

"Better not go in, sir."

"Better wait for the cops, sir."

Nevertheless, Mr. Jencks broke through. He had courage, Willard Jencks. He stood now at one end of the room, staring at his dead benefactor, staring at Niehlson, staring at the two men who held Niehlson by his arms.

"Who is this man?" Jencks asked.

"Herman Niehlson, sir."

"He's an accountant."

Herman could not say anything. He did not realize his danger, and yet he began to understand the difficulty of explaining, lucidly, just how this had happened. The English language bothered him as he tried to arrange his mind. It tripped him.

"Did you kill Mr. Herd?" Mr. Jencks asked, facing Niehlson.

The charge was brutal, and Herman hesitated a moment, trying to find words adequate to deny it. His lips tried to form words. Finally he said, "No sir."

Miss Snell said, in the general murmur: "He was alone with Mr. Herd, Mr. Jencks. I came into the room. I found him sitting alone with Mr.—the body."

And so forth. It was the bloody mark on Grandfather's forehead that proved it.

Herman stirred. "I did not keel him!" he cried. "I luf him!"

"What's that bruise on his forehead?" one of his captors asked.

"He fell. He fell down!"

"Why?" Jencks demanded.

"Because——" Herman stopped. He held his hand before him, in a gesture of pleading, with the fingers curled upward. Then this new thought stopped him, stopped his hand, stopped his voice.

"Why?" Jencks insisted.

"Meester Yencks, dis I cannot tell you vid all dese peoples."

"You want to see me alone?"

A few of the witnesses smiled.

"I must. Only secretly can I tell."

Jencks hesitated.

"It's something to do with the books," Miss Snell said. "The two of them were studying the books. Mr. Herd was very upset."

"Yas," Herman said. "I varn you, Meester Yencks. Let me explain dis to you secret."

"Niehlson," Mr. Jencks said sternly, "unless you yourself have been tampering with our books there is nothing in them that is not open to the world."

"You lie!" Herman shouted. His face was white and sweaty, and he thrust it forward. The crowd stirred to protect Jencks, who stepped farther away. The two clerks shook Herman by the collar.

The police arrived.

Had Niehlson received some telepathic knowledge during that moment when Grandfather was staring into and beyond his eyes? No one can tell how much of this silent intercourse there is between minds. He did not know what the old man intended to rescue from the safe, but he sensed a connection between the safe and this irregular entry in the books. He knew that Grandfather would not want this scandal given to the public until something had been done to the safe. There were no facts in this knowledge. There was not even thought, as the word is understood. Herman refused to talk. He offered to tell Jencks in private, but he refused to have so much as a detective present. Everyone thought this a crude Swedish ruse for the purpose of killing Jencks. The police threat-

ened him, but this only emphasized his stubbornness. The more they swore, the more inevitable his silence. They elaborated a search for Herman's weapon, and the chief of the detective squad elaborated a theory that Herman had killed Grandfather to protect himself from some dishonesty in the books. That, together with Jencks's epigram about the books being open to the world, was what the evening newspapers carried to the city around the jail.

About half an hour after they had led this Swede to the police station, young Joseph Herd stepped from the elevator at the sixteenth floor of the Herd Building. It was an early start for the heir-apparent, who, on his informal visits to the office, had never arrived before eleven o'clock. He now walked into the lobby which his grandfather had entered so determinedly two hours before and approached the secretary, who bowed her head with more deference than usual and looked at him with fitting seriousness.

"Mr. Jencks, of course? I'm sure he wants to see you." Her attitude was exactly calculated to console a young man who had inherited fifty millions. "Mr. Joseph Herd, Jr., to see you, Mr. Jencks," she said into the telephone. "Very well." She smiled sympathetically at Joe. "You may go right in."

Passing through the offices you could see that no one was working to-day. People stood whispering to each other, or whispered across their desks. There was an attitude of deference toward Joe as he passed them. Miss Cole opened the door of Mr. Jencks's office for him.

"'Lo Uncle Will."

"Good-morning, Joseph." Mr. Jencks fumbled with his papers. He was red and embarrassed. Somehow he must tell Joe about the tragedy. He, in whose favor Grandfather's will had been changed, must tell the former heir that the testator had been murdered fifty feet away. Put yourself in that position. And besides that, Mr. Jencks understood from Joe's visit that the young fellow had decided to reform, after his conversation with Grandfather yesterday; had come to the office to win back his fortune from the old man. Mr. Jencks fidgeted with words.

"Where's the body?" Joe asked.

"Oh—ah—you know? That is, I see you know about the sad event that occurred——"

"Sure," Joe said. "Where is he?"

"He's—ah—he's in his office. The coroner is examining. Did Mother tell you?"

"No."

"Oh."

"See here, Uncle Will. I understand they got this feller Niehlson in jail for it."

"Yes—the unfortunate man was quite violent. I'm going to have him examined. If he's proved insane I shall get him pardoned." Mr. Jencks passed a silk handkerchief across his bald forehead. Joe always surprised him.

"You're crazy," Joe said. "That guy didn't kill Grandfather any more'n I did."

"The evidence, Joseph, is pretty clear. I should advise you to wait until you know the facts."

"I know all th' facts. Herman went in t' see Grand-

father with th' books. Grandfather called for th' Finance Corporation books. Miss Snell noticed he was upset. Twenty minutes later you all find Grandfather dead with Niehlson beside him on th' floor. You've all forgotten Grandfather was subjec' to heart attacks. You're all crazy."

Mr. Jencks was not merely surprised now. He was resentful. "I don't know how you got all this, Joseph, so quickly."

"It's true, isn't it?"

"Substantially," Mr. Jencks said. "Substantially."

Miss Cole opened the door. "Mr. Delaney wants a word with you at once, Mr. Jencks."

"Show him in," Joe said.

"Eh—oh." Mr. Jencks looked angrily at Joe, but he allowed the insult to pass, and said, "Yes, show him in, Miss Cole."

Delaney entered. "Hello Will, hello Joe."

"Yes John," Mr. Jencks said. "Sit down."

Joe said nothing.

"I'm not butting in, I hope?"

"Now listen," Joe said, facing him. "I dropped in here to warn you and Uncle Will not to prosecute this fake charge against Niehlson. He didn't kill Grandfather and I know it for a fact."

"Oh now, that's preposterous," Delaney said. "How could you *know* it?"

"You're president of Intercity Aviation, aren't you?"

"Yes——"

"Well, Niehlson is your accountant."

"Well? Why do you tell me?"

"Well?" Mr. Jencks said.

"Your Finance Corporation," Joe said, "owns most of that aviation stock."

"Is this supposed to be news?"

"If you are implying——" Mr. Jencks broke in.

"I'm not implyin'," Joe said. "I'm tellin' you that th' Intercity stock is down in its own books for one amount, and on th' Finance Corporation's for another."

Mr. Jencks digested this thought uncomfortably.

"Well naturally," Delaney said.

Mr. Jencks said at length: "Supposing your information to be true, Joseph—though God knows how you could have access to our secret books—it is no grounds for the vague accusation against John and myself which seems to be latent in your present aggressive attitude. You must realize that you have no experience in business, and that what looks like a carelessness in accounting may be, and very likely is, evidence of sound financial method. I mean, for instance, the Intercity stock—most of which we own, it is true—may appear to us to have appreciated in value. If you knew elementary economics you would know that the par value of a stock, or its issue value, has little or nothing to do with its market value——"

"Aw can it."

"Sir!" Mr. Jencks arose. There was silence.

"Now wait a minute," Delaney said. "Let's get this clear. You're accusing us, I gather, Herd, of crooked bookkeeping."

"No, I'm not," Joe said. "I'm tellin' you what

killed Grandfather. When he saw those Intercity entries he got a stroke."

Mr. Jencks sat down.

"Why should he?" Delaney asked.

"Because," Joe almost shouted, "he'd never laid eyes on those entries before, and you know it!"

Delaney smiled easily. "I wish I had your imagination," he said. "I'd write fiction. As a matter of fact, the late Mr. Herd was thoroughly familiar with those entries, and with every transaction of Intercity Aviation."

"That," Joe said quietly, "is a god-damn lie."

"What's that?" It was Delaney who arose this time.

"Easy John! Let me speak! Let me speak! Joseph! What right have you to come in here and heckle us this way, sir? Our books aren't open to your private opinions!"

"They'll be open to public opinion if you don't watch out."

"What of it?" Delaney shouted. "They're perfectly straight."

"Yeah?" Joe arose and put his hands in his hip pockets. "Technically, I guess they are. But I know this. Intercity is a gag outfit and you've been usin' it t' buy property for your new West Side alley, and you've got Grandfather's money in it, and you've never told him what the purpose of it is, nor what he's investin' in. And besides that," Joe said, checking their interruptions, "you've written down half a million in paper profits on it, and Grandfather had no more idear of that than he had of raisin' 'sparagus."

"Joseph——"

"Now see here," Delaney broke in harshly, "you don't know what you're talking about, and I'm going to go out of my way to explain this to you, so you won't make yourself any more ridiculous than you are. Intercity is an idea I've had for a long time; it's a corporation to develop air fields, and particularly air fields near business districts, in the heart of cities. As such, it has bought a lot of land along the West Side——"

"For an air field?" Joe said incredulously.

"Precisely. Now, as you might have foreseen, and as we all did, certain practical difficulties arose, after we had purchased the land. Among other things, there's a realty improvement company that wants the same land, and which, a month ago, offered us a million and a half for it. It was not only unnecessary, it would have been bad business, to fail to capitalize on this offer in our books. The actual transfer of the property will be made in another month. Don't you see how ridiculous you make yourself, coming in here and insinuating that your uncle and I are crooks?"

"Hunh," Joe said. He grinned sarcastically. "That's a neat idea, and I knew you'd have somethin' like it all ready to pop. The fact is, however, that this airplane business killed my grandfather. And furthermore," he said, turning to Jencks, "if you try to prove it didn't, watch your step."

Mr. Jencks was wiping his forehead again, and there was that in his expression which told Joe that a lot of what Delaney had just said was news to him.

Joe laughed. Then he flapped his hand. "So long," he said. He opened the door. He stood on the threshold a moment. "And you better keep it out of the newspapers."

This advice the very highest finance could not possibly circumvent.

After the door had clicked shut the room was uncomfortable. At length Mr. Jencks said, "Whew! I don't know what's the matter with that boy. I think he's going mad."

"Oh hell," Delaney said. "He's sore at us. Who wouldn't be?"

"Well at least," Mr. Jencks said, "he's shown us a situation that ought to be looked into. I didn't realize myself what you were doing, John. Half a million was too much——"

"Now don't get panicky. You wanted credit and I got it for you. This fake corporation——"

"Holding corporation, John." Mr. Jencks was still a little weak.

Delaney smiled. "All right. Holding corporation. Whatever it is, it's easily protected."

"Am I to understand," Mr. Jencks asked seriously, "that you did tell Herd about this?"

"No," Delaney said. "Of course I didn't."

"But you just told Joe that——"

"For God's sake, Will! What did you expect me to tell Joe?"

"But my dear man," Mr. Jencks cried, rising, "if Herd was ignorant of this entry, and if Niehlson did show it to him, then no doubt Joe is right!"

"Now listen, Willard!"

"No, but that Swede may be innocent!"

"Yes," Delaney cried, "and he may be a crook. How do you know? Why do you swallow this story of Joe's like a fish? I never heard you listen to the kid before. The grand jury'll send Niehlson up, and don't you fool yourself. If we were to stop it, it'd look suspicious."

"But if the man is innocent!"

Delaney looked at his superior easily. "What business did he have prying into our affairs? For all you know, Joe may have put him up to this. Who else would try to convince Herd that you were a crook?"

"Yes," Mr. Jencks sat down. But then he said, "We can't protect ourselves by charging an innocent man with murder." (Serve and Refrain.)

"And we're not going to."

"Well?"

"By the time Niehlson gets to trial I'll have everything fixed."

"How?"

"As I see it, the chief difficulty will be to explain this investment, and justify it, to Herd's executor."

"To Phelps—yes."

"And the way we're going to do that," Delaney said, taking a turn around the office, "is by actually offering—in disguise, of course—to buy this property from Intercity for a million and a half."

"I don't think it's worth it."

"It's worth it if it gets us out of this, isn't it?"

"Eh—yes—well, it would have to be."

"It's too damned bad, Will, but it's going to cost you some cash."

"But—um."

"Unless," Delaney said, "one of the boulevard corporations could buy it."

"No," Jencks said. "None of them could. Not at present."

"Then you'll have to buy it," Delaney said. "Organize a fake corporation——"

"Subsidiary corporation, John."

"Oh hell. Subsidiary corporation, yes."

"Um," Mr. Jencks said. He felt uncomfortable. It was not a very idealistic plan.

"Phelps, of course, will have the controlling vote in Intercity," Delaney said, "but he can't very well refuse such an offer as that. Why you could sue him if he did."

"Um," Mr. Jencks said. "Um. I suppose I'll have to do that. Yes. Perhaps I'll do that, John."

It must not be assumed, however, that Joe had begun a campaign to save Niehlson from a false charge of murder; for Joe was proud of his indifference, and particularly of his indifference toward the Herd Realty Company. He had been disinherited from fifty million dollars and he did not care. Since he was human, you can't blame him for taking pleasure in his carelessness. It was, in fact, the most consistent pleasure he had, and the only one that his family could not destroy. To undertake Niehlson's case, in opposition to Jencks; to throw into print all the evidence he had about Intercity Aviation; to go on the witness stand and testify against Uncle Will, would surely look as if he were taking revenge for his loss, as if he did care, fundamentally, whether he

had fifty million dollars or not. So no one—except perhaps that unfortunate Swede—expected Joe to stir out of his lethargy; and for once in his life he lived up to expectations.

But here is an element of strength in Joe's character; here is why he is worth writing about at all: he knew that Jencks could not send an innocent man to the chair. Like a good farmer, Joe knew his seeds, and like a farmer he saved his energies for ploughing and cultivating. He did not waste any effort on the seed itself, or worry it with scientific exactions. He planted it. He waited for it to grow. There is simplicity in such an attitude, unusual in cities; a philosophic laziness which seems disreputable on Wall Street, but which might be an asset in Iowa. A good bond issue will thrive on analysis, but you daren't bother your corn with questions. Just plant the corn under the best possible conditions. That is how Joe treated the minds of men.

PART III

It was to be a quiet week-end. The wind blows cold over Long Island in December, and most of Harry's crowd were noisily tucked away in Florida. Harry was buzzing with Van Duyn projects and had come out to Port Washington to work. Break Neck (as he had christened his father's estate) was in a peaceful mood, with smoke lolling from its chimneys. The elder Gales were in town. Snow had fallen during the week and lay nearly a foot thick on the sloping English roof and on the graded lawn. It was the kind of snow that smothers the Earth, for there was no sunlight falling on it, and no grass showed through. As John Delaney swung his car up the drive Caroline felt that she loved the iron-colored trees that reared up out of the snow, like Neptune's horses rearing from the sea; and loved the funny little summer house with its roof piled with snow like a soldier's cap in the Civil War; and loved the red-nosed Irishman who was cleaning snow from the doorstep; and, in the library, the smell of the tea wagon before an open fire.

It was the first full rush of love that had come for a long time. The last few years had been so hectic

with trouble that she had had no time to love anything. Ever since her début, three years ago, one party had succeeded another, and one problem had chased another through her heart—how ought she to live? what standards? why marry? what kind of a job? And all this time she had wanted intimacy with Joe more than any of the hundred other things that she pretended to want; but she had covered that up, the way the winter had covered up the houses and fields. The winter and her heart were duplicates of one another. She nestled into the winter like a child into an older brother's arms.

Indecision was not characteristic of Caroline. Her last interview with Joe, on the pantry drain board with the ginger ale in her hand, had been a failure. She had not slept that night because of it, but by morning she knew what she was going to do; just as, on the golf links, after a moment's thought, she knew what advantage to take of a given lie. That, however, was the morning of Grandfather's death, and for the moment Caroline's private affairs were submerged in family obsequies. She had not gone out to Gale's with Delaney that week-end, nor even the next, but now she was coming out to rest her nerves for a few days. She was an heiress now—one of the richest unmarried girls in New York. She was just past twenty-one. She could choose anything she wanted from the city; from her friends: she had power over the next forty years of her life. . . .

And she was particularly touched by the way Delaney understood her mood of quietness. In this respect he was a contrast to Joe, who never under-

stood any mood, or pretended not to; who was, by his silence, always asserting himself. This Delaney was more mature than that. He had loved, and women had loved him, and he could afford to adjust himself to the moods of an attractive girl. At forty Delaney's face was large but firm; he had freckles on his nose; and he had the gray-blue eyes of a man who can shoot straight with a gun. The outdoors clung to him, for he was always disappearing on hunting trips. It was Delaney who had taught Caroline golf. He smoked a pipe. He drank quietly, and talked with a narrative fluency that one encounters in the smoking rooms of transatlantic steamers. He knew the summer and winter resorts of two continents, and his frequent visits to them had tanned him for life. He was at his best just arising from dinner, before the ladies walked out to the drawing room. You left him, wishing that you could hear the story that he would tell Mr. Z. over their coffee and their liqueurs.

This was one of the brief periods in Harry Gale's life when he was involved in no love affair whatever, and consequently Break Neck lacked its usual atmosphere of intrigue. There were only five persons at dinner—Phil Biddle and Jane Knowles, who were in love—John Delaney and Caroline Jencks—and the host. Phil and Jane had been in love as long as anyone could remember, but since Jane's family disapproved of Phil (on the grounds of polo and earned income) they lived together instead of getting married. The others felt like accomplices to this romantic affair. Everyone was tolerant and happy. Harry served up some Chambertin '19, and in the circle of

golden light shed by four candles on the mahogany table, each one said things that he had never expected to say, and developed ideas that he had never had before.

After dinner, conversation having dropped a moment, Phil and Jane said they wanted to go skiing by moonlight. No one bothered to remind them that there was no moon.

"Wouldn't it be fun!" Caroline said when she heard of the idea. "But I don't think I could stand up."

"Certainly you could stand up," Delaney said.

"But in the dark! You wouldn't know whether you were going uphill or down."

"You could use an earth-inductor compass," Phil Biddle suggested. "Or whatever it is."

"An altimeter would be more helpful," Delaney said.

"Sure," Phil said. "Bolt it to the toe of your ski."

"Well, you won't go fast," Harry said. "Everything around here's worn down."

"They're always fixing the road," Phil said.

"Well anyway, I'm going," Jane said, rising and smoothing her skirt.

"Right," Phil said.

Delaney turned to Caroline. "Come on and try it," he said in a low voice. He himself had skied in Norway and on hunting trips in Canada.

Caroline was excited, and surely not about the skis. She was a beginner with skis, but there could be no danger on these Long Island slopes, even in the dark. Yet she was excited and could hardly answer

John. "Yes," she said with a kind of gasp. "All right."

"I'm going to work," Harry said. Caroline happened to look into his eyes. She had never noticed the intense irony of Harry's eyes.

"Oh come along," Delaney said easily.

"No," Harry said. "I've got a bunch of reports to read. Has everybody got skis and poles and things?"

Caroline found herself gliding down the slope behind Harry's house, with John's arm around her shoulders. It was exciting because everything ahead of them was black; you could see only snow sloping away from the ski points, and on the horizon a faint thread where the white earth met darker cloud. The cold blew against her cheeks and ears. The skis broke through dry snow with a faint hiss. Delaney peered forward.

"Hold on," he said. "We're going faster."

She felt the air tighten against her cheeks as they gathered speed. They passed two shadows—Phil and Jane already toiling back up the hill.

"Yi—aie!" Delaney called.

"Come up in our tracks!" Phil shouted.

For a moment Caroline seemed to float in darkness, with no weight. She was free of the earth's tug and of all the thousand threads that held her to her father's house. She was momentarily no more than a consciousness. Then the wind subsided, her skis bit the snow less easily, her body almost lost its balance over the tips of them. John held her tightly. The skis stopped, with a definite little click into the snow, like a period at the end of a sentence.

"There," John said. "That wasn't so bad."

"Oh it was wonderful! I wish I could ski."

"Well, of course you could," John said. "There isn't any athletics that you can't do, Caroline."

"Basketball," she said. "I can't play basketball."

"That's not athletics, that's a nuisance."

"I think so too. They used to make me play at school."

"I remember you at school," John said. "You were so serious."

"Was I?"

"You still are," he said. "You worry about everything."

"How do you know?"

"My dear," he said, "I can see it in your face. You don't know why you're alive, sometimes, because no one has ever told you. Your father can't tell you because he doesn't know himself."

"I think that's true," Caroline said. "I think I know more than Dad does."

"I'm sure you do," John said. "But your generation doesn't know much yet, Caroline."

"Oh I think it does," she said vaguely. She had a peculiar feeling of being captured, for her skis were unfamiliar and they bound her feet to one spot. She could only move forward, but it would seem ridiculous to start walking forward into the night. So she continued to lean against his shoulder, looking ahead. They were silent for almost a minute, and during this time Caroline went back to her conversation with Joe in the pantry, and the decision that had followed it; and suddenly she knew that she needed this man

who was holding his arm around her shoulders. She could live the Jencks out of her nature with him. It was the Jencks in her that made her so serious. . . .

Even as she was thinking this, John said, "I think what makes you serious is that you're afraid of growing up to be like your father."

Her hand tightened in his. She said nothing because the correspondence between their thoughts was sufficient. It was as if they were standing in a circle of telepathic light, like the golden light of those tall candles on the dinner table; standing in the middle of Long Island fields, inspired to ideas they had never had before; in a halo of understanding.

Phil and Jane were yelling for a clear track.

"Let's get out of their way," John said. "Keep step with me." They began gliding forward in rhythm, turning off to the right. Then they stopped to wait for Phil and Jane.

Caroline looked up toward his face. "Do you know my mother, John—my real mother?"

"Sophia Cox? Certainly."

"I'd like to be like her."

"A most interesting woman," John Delaney said, "and fundamentally you are just like her. You've been brought up differently, that's all. You haven't learned yet what she knew before you were born. I hope you don't mind my talking this way?"

"Of course not."

"I've got an old man's privilege," he said.

"Don't be silly, John. Maybe you still have something to learn yourself."

He squeezed her hand. "If you like," he said.

"What is this that Mother knows, that I don't know?"

John paused for his effect. "Have you ever been in love?"

She thought of Joe. "No," she said firmly.

"Well, your mother has." He shrugged a little. "That's all the difference."

They saw the others glide past them at some distance.

"We're going on," Phil shouted.

"How'd you make it, Cal?" Jane called.

"Wonderful! It's like flying."

Jane and Phil began walking away through the snow.

"Are you coming down again?" Phil called.

"Sure," Delaney said.

"Well, keep to your left and we'll keep to ours."

Caroline heard them laughing over this, for some reason. She felt pleasantly alone with John.

"Well," he said easily, "I suppose we might go up for another, mightn't we?"

Of course she wanted to coast on her skis again, and feel herself floating in darkness, yet she was piqued that he should suggest it. She was reluctant to climb the long hill. She wanted to talk. Nevertheless, she began climbing. John's mind seemed altogether firm about this. But on the way down, in that moment when she seemed to have no body, but to be a phantom gliding, feeling him and his skill at her side, she was glad that he had given her this moment to herself, a last moment alone, before proceeding with that conversation. Certainly he was a master of

subtleties like this; it was pleasure to feel his control over himself and her. She knew that she could not resist him now, even if she wanted to resist him; and she did not want to.

A few minutes later they were standing at the foot of the hill again. Caroline was cold and told John that she wanted to go in.

"All right. We'll go in and sit by the fire."

They began turning their skis. Just as they were starting up the hill she felt his hand on her arm, restraining her.

"Caroline," he said, "before we go in I want to finish our conversation."

"Yes, John."

"I've watched you grow up," he said, "from a little girl, and I think I know more about you than anyone in the world does. Am I wrong?"

"No John—I think you do."

He said, "I have a right to tell you, haven't I, that I think you're the most lovely, altogether the most fascinating girl in the world?"

"You don't think that," she whispered with her head bowed.

"I do," he said. "I know of no person with such richness of becoming—do you know what I mean? The richness of becoming a woman. You have that and you always will have it. It's a kind of perfume that men can never trace to its source. And you will always be more fascinating than other women are, because you have the three qualities that make women fascinating."

"What are they?"

"Courage," he said, "and beauty, and elusiveness."

She smiled in the darkness.

"For the past several years," he said, "you have needed someone—a man—to discover this." He drew her toward him, so that she looked up into his face. "And I want to tell you Caroline," he said earnestly, "that I envy that man." He paused. "Because," he said, "I wish I were that man."

She was looking down again, and she scarcely heard herself whisper to the snow, "Perhaps you will be."

"I want you, Caroline," he said, bending over her hair. Then he put his hand on her chin and lifted it. And after he had looked through the darkness into her eyes he kissed her—standing at her side upon his skis.

For the next several months Caroline lived in that state of self-surprise that had been caused by learning to swim, when she was a little girl, or learning to ride a bicycle, or playing eighteen holes of golf in eighty strokes. I think, if the Earth were conscious, this sensation of godliness would be the characteristic one of spring, and Peter would have felt this too, had he been able to walk on the water by himself. For we are all born in the winter. And the cause of Caroline's happiness was not Delaney so much as her own self. It was not the fact of being Delaney's mistress, but of becoming the mistress of her life, that changed her. She was grateful to John, and so deeply that she mistook gratitude for love; but really her profound love

was for the self that was so plentiful of wonder, and as delighted with life as a canary in a bath.

She might have been happier had it not been for Joe. At first she had had no feeling about him, other than one of power; for she had at last found a defense against his silence, his insolent green eyes, and her desire for his approval. For some time she had taken advantage of her secret by showing him that she cared nothing for his opinions. But one day she had found herself lying about Delaney (it was a question of a week-end she had spent in Boston, supposedly with school friends, and she had quickly substituted a name for John); and the moment she lied she realized that Joe had forced the lie. He still had his power over her, and Delaney was nothing more than a means of concealing this from herself. This angered her. She ought to be proud of John, she ought even to be brazen about him, she ought to tell Joe that they were in love. Nevertheless, she never did tell; and at the same time, it was only with some reluctance, one night early in the new year, that she promised to marry John. She did not really want to marry him. Spring turned out to be more complicated than she had supposed.

It is worth while noting that for some time Caroline's was about the only family affair of importance of which Joe was ignorant. He really had no idea that Delaney had entered Caroline's life in this way. He had taken his power over her for granted, and the idea persisted in the back of his mind: a feeling of possession that was selfish and unearned. This was one of the reasons why he continued to live at the

Jencks house, where everything was alien to him. He wanted to dominate Caroline, even as he refused to pay her for the privilege. He loafed around the house through Christmas time, doing just exactly nothing, because nothing seemed worth his while. Somehow his mind perceived a fallacy in everything human and was never able to reach beyond that critical point. In a sense he was too wise. Man could manufacture nothing, or sell nothing, or buy nothing that had any final reality for him. He lacked the exuberant emotions that carry most of us such a great distance through a routine that we dare not turn back. He had almost never been young. He was a kind of intellectual runt. He admired creative art and talent, but he had neither genius nor talent himself. He watched Willard Jencks get himself into a bad financial tangle, and he knew how he could ruin Uncle Will if he wanted to. But in this sense he was even more disillusioned than the millionaire Madison van Duyn, who, with the same philosophy of futility, had turned himself into a destroyer because he could not contain his energies. While Van Duyn and Harry Gale and Willard Jencks were in the midst of the most exhausting excitements, Joe basked. He basked like a turtle in the pale sunlight of stoicism.

He wondered how Van Duyn was able to stir men so. A year ago Harry Gale had been drinking, playing indoor golf, and founding country clubs; now he was a victim of speed and efficiency. Whenever they met each other Joe had a pleasant sense of seclusion against the tautness of Gale's nerves. Joe had mastered his conscience and he enjoyed his own worth-

lessness. What actually existed interested him; what people said ought to exist made him feel sick. He wanted a reason for that "ought." Moral philosophy seemed to him an infantile preoccupation, because, for hopes and wishes, he had substituted facts and results. You may say that this attitude is ruinous, because any of life's results can be argued away by a critical mind. There is never any good answer to the question "What of it?" and it is no exaggeration to say that Joe had built his mind around that question. On the other hand, his position had a certain philosophic strength. The age had poured its strongest acid on his soul, and could eat no deeper, having eaten to the bone.

Presently he noticed the change in Caroline, and he began to study her with that lazy curiosity of his, suspecting the truth in all but John Delaney, whom he despised too much to suspect. Joe needed a jolt; and this, as had been the case of so many lives in and around New York, came finally from Harry Gale, whose experience of life, as Tarne said, was almost always vicarious, and whose hobby was to stimulate others. Harry was somewhat Mephistophelean in his methods; he had led numerous Fausts into hell, and sometimes, but not always, had helped them out of hell. In Joe's case I don't think he realized how many tons of explosive were hidden behind the lazy stubborn face, or perhaps he would not have said so casually, one January afternoon when they had just finished lunch at Thirty-three:

"I've got to run back to Van's scenic railway, but there's one thing's been on my mind for a couple of

weeks. I guess I'll get rid of it first." There was an affectionate malice in his eyes. "You asked me once to keep an eye on Caroline."

The bored expression on Joe's face was wiped out at once. Harry felt that he had never looked at this face before. There was the same whorled bewilderment that Caroline had so often noticed.

Joe had put down his coffee. "Yeah."

"Caroline and Delaney."

"Yeah."

"Well," Harry said, "they're living together."

"Delaney——"

"And Caroline."

"How do you know?"

"My dear Joe——"

"How do you know!"

"I give house parties," Harry said.

Joe fisted his hand. "Listen Gale," he said. "I know you. I've heard of some of your damned tinkerin', only this time you got your monkey wrench into bigger machinery—by God——"

Joe could not speak any more.

Harry smiled at him coolly. "You got the wrong number, Central," he said. "You want Delaney."

"Delaney *hell!*" Joe cried. "Delaney *hell!*"

"*Please*," Harry said. "I'm not living with the girl. Never even tried to."

Joe stared at him. For a balanced minute he recognized Harry's coolness. Harry was sane and was speaking sane sentences. It was all right. Caroline had lived with Delaney. What of it? And then for the first time since he was a kid he answered the question.

Thinking of Delaney, he clenched his fist; thinking of Caroline, he felt chilly. Life answered the question for him—his emotions.

Gale was astonished by this reaction, somewhat frightened. He tried to speak calmly. "It happened," he said, "just before Christmas—at least that's the first time I saw it happen. They came out to Break Neck. I sat up reading some reports for Van, and on my way to bed I saw Delaney—going into her room——"

"The son of a bitch!" He was transfixed by the memory of this same Delaney sneaking out of the rear door of his father's cabin in the Adirondacks, years and years ago. This vision of one man seducing two generations was disgusting. It was incestuous. But since it was not within the power of his vocabulary he could only stare at Gale like an animal.

"For God's sake!" Harry cried. "She isn't the only woman!"

Joe said nothing.

"Women do that, you know," Harry said. "They know how." He paused. "Maybe she's in love with the guy."

"She isn't." The voice came out of the ground, thirty-three stories below.

His mother had not been in love with Delaney either. He remembered that. And he remembered Cal, sitting on the drain board of the pantry sink, last November, swinging her legs. Words struck his memory like bells: "Joe, I was jealous of Sally." It was such an awkward thing to say—the crazy kid! He had understood all this, had he not? Cal wanted

to break away from the family, and yet he had not helped her. He could have helped her, but he had been too lazy. She had chosen her own clumsy way; Delaney, of all ways to take out of the Jencks family! Or out of the Herd family! Caroline was more deeply involved in both families than ever she had been. She was inextricably entangled in the skeletons. . . .

"She doesn't love him," he muttered to Harry. (He had seen Caroline—almost naked her thoughts had been when he burst into the pantry that night.)

"Some one else?" Harry asked.

Joe glowered.

"Maybe this is a reaction from some——" Harry stopped. Momentarily his intuitions had failed him, but he now saw, in the balance of Joe's rough face, who it was that Caroline secretly loved. And he had not expected this. He was not at all prepared for so much vicarious experience. "Hell Joe," he paused. "I didn't know."

Joe looked away.

"Hell," Harry said. "I'm sorry."

"Did you make 'em do it?"

"No. I swear to God I didn't. Not after you asked me to watch——"

Joe flapped his hand. "All right," he said.

"I just watched," Harry said.

"You watched." He hunched his shoulders. "Come on," he said. "Let's get the hell out of here." He arose abruptly.

"Where're you going?"

"Gonna get drunk."

Crimmons had hurried up, but Joe was already halfway across the room. Harry followed him.

Joe felt humiliated, and it was an effort to restrain his anger at Gale. He felt as if Gale had reached down inside of him and had jerked something loose. He was not prepared to admit him as the surgeon of his subconscious. Having watched Gale perform his operations on others, he had always scorned the victims, who could have no knowledge of themselves, in the Socratic sense, and no respect for their own secrets. Joe loved his secrets and he thought he knew how to keep them. But Gale had reached in, with his rubber glove. . . . But this was only a corollary to the proposition that Delaney had seduced Caroline. He used to laugh at that expression—seducing a woman—but having interrupted Caroline in the pantry he knew what Delaney had done. As one man against another, he knew the methods that Delaney had used. He himself could have done the same thing—women are such fools. And Delaney had caught his mother in the same way ('My God, Frank, it has nothing to do with love!').

Harry said in the elevator, "Why don't you spend the afternoon with Tarne?"

"Sure," Joe said.

"Rap said he wanted to see you," Harry said.

"Sure."

Gale stepped out of the elevator at the second floor. "So long then. Keep your shirt on, Joe."

"Sure."

He had no intention of visiting Tarne. He wanted

to see Caroline, and this desire was so immediate as to be almost tactual. To himself he supposed that he wanted to verify Harry's story, but his motive was less abstract than that. He really wanted to assure himself that he did not care for Caroline at all. He would like to reëstablish the old *laissez-faire*. He reached the Jencks residence about two o'clock and learned that Caroline had gone to her room to lie down. Diana and Willard Jencks were lunching alone.

"You'd better not disturb her," his mother said. "She was out until three this morning."

"Her habits are getting as bad as yours," Uncle Will said. He was thinner, and he had nervous circles under his eyes.

"Haven't got any habits," Joe said.

"That's absurd," Uncle Will said. "All men have habits. It's a psychological necessity."

"Incidentally," Joe said, shoving his hands into his pockets, "you better develop the habit of payin' off your mortgages."

Uncle Will put down his spoon and stared at Joe across his dessert.

"Because I hear you're stalling 'em off," Joe said. "You're s'posed to be a real-estate giant, an' people expect giants to come through."

"What in thunder are you talking about?" Mr. Jencks cried.

"Mortgages," Joe said. "So long."

Willard and Diana stared at each other.

"What does he mean, Willard?"

"Heaven knows, my dear. Sometimes I think the poor boy is crazy."

"I'm afraid he's going to disturb Caroline."

"I must talk to Caroline some day." Mr. Jencks wiped his mouth and arose. "She's copying Joe in certain respects."

Joe was knocking on Caroline's door.

"Who's there?"

"It's me—Joe."

"Yes Joe." She opened the door a crack and peered out from behind it. "What?" she asked.

Seeing her, he lost a temporary mental balance. He did care, fundamentally, whether she had lived with Delaney or not. His throat was husky. "Can I come in?"

"Why yes." Her eyes studied his face a moment. "Just a minute." The door closed. A few seconds later she called out to him. He found her in a kimono of jade green, settling herself onto a chintz-covered couch. "Hello, Josey." She did not look at him for a few seconds. He had time to close the door, and walk across the room, and stand over her with his hands in his pockets.

When she did look up at him she was calm. "What's happened?" she asked.

He was studying her keen face, and her body under the jade green. He had never felt such a complex emotion, as in this moment when, in his appreciation of her loveliness, there lurked an almost physical disgust, a sensation of death in loveliness, as actual as the sight of maggots. He stood working the muscles of his jaws, as if looking for some mark on her, some tangible rot, that would make this disgust of his less mysterious, and hence more remote from the soul.

He would rather detect on Caroline overt disease, than to imagine Delaney's words to her, to which both she and his mother had succumbed. The memory of his father was ablaze within him. He hated the bodies of women, which show no traces of their men. And he was not accustomed to this kind of reaction. Caroline could have lived with anyone else without subverting his emotions this way. Always he had detested the restraints of prejudice; but now he was altogether a victim of prejudice, and determined to overpower her with his prejudice, by any means. She would give up Delaney whether she loved the man or not. Joe became a tyrant. Caroline, who had been frightened by his face, was now, as it were, pinned to the couch by his stare. She saw what he was staring at, and little by little the blood crept into her throat, the back of her neck, her cheeks, and seemed to beat against the roots of her hair. Therefore it was some time before she could adequately defend herself; and by that time Joe had made it unthinkable to lie.

He swung away from her to pace the room. His back reminded her of his grandfather. In a flurry of fear she realized how like the old man he was. There was the same tyrannous stride, the same fixity, the same exaltation of personal bigotry. . . .

"I've got something to say to you," he said, turning on her.

"Well, go ahead." She managed to be defiant.

"I see you know what I'm goin' to talk about."

"You'd better tell me, hadn't you?"

"'Bout Delaney." he said.

She could not keep her heart from choking her a little.

"Someone has accused you of livin' with him," he said.

"Accused?"

"That's th' word I chose." He bent his knee and straightened it two or three times, holding his hands behind his back.

"Is it against the law?" she said.

"Don't get flip."

She had him at a disadvantage, however, because he was surprised at her composure. She was not at all the girl whose thoughts he had interrupted on the pantry drain board. You would not say that she was happier, but you observed an improvement in her swordsmanship.

"Well really Joe," she said. "I don't see what business it is of yours. I suppose one of Harry's crowd told you, and I suppose it's all over town. But I don't care because—I'm proud of him."

"Proud!" He turned away and began pacing again.

She let him fume awhile, and then said, "Joe."

"Well?"

"You can't tell me, with all your notions, that it's wrong to live with a man, and especially if he loves you, and if you're going to marry——"

"Going to marry!"

"Yes. We're engaged."

He just stared.

"It isn't any of your business, Joe, whether we live together first, or not."

"He's asked you to marry him?"

"Yes."

"Since when?" Joe asked.

"A month ago."

For a moment he thought of telling her about Delaney's affair with his mother. But would that stop Caroline? He had had enough of the foolishness of women, he would never expect them to be logical. And he despised slander. "The son of a bitch!" he muttered.

"Joe!" She sat up straight on the couch. "If you're going to say things like that you can leave this room. John's my fiancé and you can't insult him without insulting me. Someday he'll be your brother-in-law——"

"Aw for crysake, Cal!"

She stopped speaking.

"To begin with," he said, "I'm not your brother."

Caroline looked at her hands on her lap. "I've always felt that you were," she said. She looked up. "Please, Josey. Don't act like Grandfather."

"I'm not acting anything like Grandfather."

"Yes you are. You're just like him."

"You're tryin' t' change th' subject, I s'pose. Well, you can't. I'm standin' here to tell you you can't marry this guy."

"That's like Grandfather," she said.

"Aw can Grandfather. I say you're not goin' t' do this."

"Joe, when two people love each other——"

"Two!"

"Yes, of course."

"You love him?"

"Yes. And he loves me."

"Like hell."

Caroline bit her lip.

"Besides," Joe said, "he's too old for you. He's forty."

"I'm sick of young people."

"Meaning me, I s'pose."

"No, not at all."

"I know things about this family that would make your hair turn gray in a week," he said.

"That's rot."

"No it ain't. The fam'ly's rot, but I'm tellin' you straight—because—when I heard this dope I realized —damn it! Listen Cal, I don't want you to get mixed up in it. I can *see*." He pointed to his eyes. "Listen to what I'm tellin' you. I can see."

"I'm listening," Caroline said, "but I can't make any sense out of it. You've got some grudge against John."

"It's more'n that."

"Well, what is it? I should think I'd be entitled to know."

He had no answer for this.

"Joe, I think you're jealous."

"Of that guy!"

"Yes. Of John—and of Dad."

This was the one accusation that he could not bear. "That's a damned lie!"

Caroline shrugged. "Swearing doesn't prove anything."

"All right. I'll prove a few things to you. In the

first place, I'll tell you when you first got this idear."

"When?" she asked.

"Remember when I bust in on you one night in the pantry?"

"Yes."

"Just about that time."

"Well." Her voice admitted that he was right. "What of it?"

"What I'm tryin' to point out," he said, "is that Delaney started workin' on you about ten days after Grandfather made his will over to your dad."

His choice of words offended her deeply.

"Wasn't it?" he insisted, thrusting his head forward.

"I'll have to ask you," she said, "to use a little decent language. The idea of John 'working on me' is insulting."

"It's what he did."

"*I* happen to know that John loves me."

"He told you so, I suppose?"

"He began paying attentions to me ever so long ago. It's I who have held back."

"What kind of attentions?"

"Everything, Joe. He's always been interested in me. He taught me golf. He taught me to ski——"

Joe sniffed.

"He took me to parties when I was a kid, and sent me flowers. He's always been kind to me."

"Did you expect him to high-hat you? You're the boss's daughter. All these attentions——"

"He didn't have to be so very attentive to me," Caroline said.

"Well, he wasn't."

"You don't know the facts and you don't know what you're talking about! How could you know the facts? The fact is that John's been in love with me for years and was just waiting for me to grow up."

"Next thing you'll be tellin' me you've been livin' with him ever since you were a kid!"

"I wouldn't mind if I had!"

Joe struggled for words a moment. Then he said, "There's no use arguin'. I know Delaney and I know he's playin' you for a sucker, just the way he plays the rest of th' family—all except me. He wants your money——"

"Joe," she said earnestly, sitting forward on the couch. "it isn't fair to hang that money over my head. I don't want it. I've told you often I'm going to give it back to you——"

"Not if you marry Delaney you won't! Besides I wouldn't take it."

"And so you accuse me——"

"I'm not accusin' you. I'm tellin' you Delaney wants that money, god dammit!"

"That's enough, Joe."

"No it's not enough. It's just th' beginning. If I can't talk you out of this I'm gonna play you out of it. I'll outplay you, Cal. Before I'm through with this house it won't be you that'll back out of this marriage. It won't be you!" He shook his fist.

Caroline sat staring at him. His intensity frightened her, because she knew that Joe was capable of almost any extreme.

"If you won't listen to me talk, you're goin' to

listen to me act!" he cried. "I'm beginnin' right now —this afternoon. And I'm not goin' to let up till the guy responsible for all this hell leaves the country!"

"What do you mean? Joe!" She started to rise.

"Why, it's intolerable!" he cried, throwing his arms above his head impatiently. "I could murder him for this!"

Caroline sat down again on the couch. She had never seen Joe this way, and she was frightened. Her lips trembled. "You just can't stand—anybody else—being happy," she said. Then she covered her face with her hands.

"You're not happy," he said.

"I was—happier—than I was."

There was a knock on the door, which was immediately opened by Diana. "Are you two fighting again?" She walked into the room easily, toward an armchair near the couch.

The muscles of Joe's jaws started working again, as they always did in situations for which he could find no words. He hated her with the old childish hate that he had learned to control. Could she possibly allow Caroline to marry her own former lover?

"Joe, I told you not to disturb Caroline. She's awfully tired."

"Yeah?" He scrutinized her. Almost as soon as he heard her voice he knew what her reaction to this proposition would be. He knew she would approve of anything that would help her to cover up the past. She would approve of anything that would give her power over John.

"Joe's been butting into my affairs, that's all,"

Caroline said. "Have you got a handkerchief, Mother?"

"Lie still, my dear, and I'll get you one." Mrs. Jencks crossed to Caroline's dressing table.

Joe came to a sudden resolution. He understood that he himself held the balance of power in this house. He crossed to the door, which Diana had left open, and shut it firmly.

"Top right-hand drawer," Caroline said.

Joe returned to them.

"I should think your own affairs were bad enough, Joseph," Diana said, "without bothering Caroline about hers." She carried the handkerchief to Caroline.

"Hers are worse," Joe said.

"Thanks Mother dear," Caroline said, taking the handkerchief. She began drying her eyes and cheeks.

"Caroline says she's goin' t' get married," Joe said.

Diana stopped on her way to the armchair. "What! Why Caroline!" She turned back to her stepdaughter. "I didn't have an idea. My dear girl!" She leaned over and kissed Caroline. "Why haven't you told me, dear?"

"We haven't told anybody," Caroline said. "Joe heard about it——"

"Joe always hears everything," Diana said. "But who *is* it, Caroline?"

"John Delaney!" Joe shouted from behind her.

Mrs. Jencks straightened herself. During a frightened second she looked at Joe. Then she dropped her eyes and drew away from the couch. "Oh," she said.

"Former-lieutenant John Delaney," Joe repeated.

Diana's eyes met his again, and then returned to the floor. "He's—isn't he a little old—for you—Caroline?"

"Why no," Caroline said, amazed at the atmosphere created by Joe and Diana. "I like that," she said. Their opposition to her was mysterious because she had never seen Joe and Diana take the same side before.

"I see," Diana said helplessly.

"Aren't you glad, Mother?" Caroline asked.

"Oh yes, Caroline! I'm awfully glad——"

Joe stepped up to his mother and gripped her arm. "What do you think about this?" he said.

Her gray elusive eyes stared at him; her cheeks were confused.

"Tell Cal what you really think," he said.

"I don't know what to—think," she said. "It's such a surprise."

"Do you realize I'm not goin' t' allow it?"

Diana made no answer.

Joe pushed her arm away from him and strolled across the room to the door. He then turned and faced them.

Caroline remembered him on the football field.

"If you can't stop her from doin' this," he said to Diana, "I *can*." And before either of the women could find an answer to this, the door closed behind him with a definite click.

Peter Madison van Duyn had two adjoining offices in the Marcy Building, one of which contained his desk, half-a-dozen telephones, dictograph, type-

writer for his personal use, and various complicated fixtures of his own invention. The second office was a small library, its walls lined with books of reference. The coloring of this second room was a sharp green. Its extravagant desk was made of creamy philisander wood, from the tropics, knotted with birds' eyes and inlaid with ebony and straight-grain walnut. Its book shelves and containers were in cubic tiers, and it was bare, except for a fountain pen at an angle above a slab of verd antique, several blotters, a single French telephone, and a small mahogany signal board through which Van Duyn could reach his secretaries. There was a fireplace on the south side of the room, over which two consoles, curving like the long ends of parabolas, supported a thick, uncarved shelf of tulip wood. Above the mantel was a portrait of Napoleon I, for which Van Duyn had paid a livable fortune. The young millionaire held all his interviews in this library, because he could not judge men philosophically, he said, behind an executive desk.

Van Duyn, who had inherited one of the three largest fortunes in America, was still on the short side of twenty-five. He considered himself the Napoleon of the Twentieth Century, and anyone having personal dealings with him was prepared to admit this. Although known to the papers, he had not yet emerged from a self-imposed obscurity. At the age of fifteen, shortly before his father's death, he had taken his education into his own hands, and since that time had spent each year working anonymously, but with furious energy, in any number of factories, business houses, and banks which his family con-

trolled. There were no limits to his ambition, and yet, fundamentally, he was disappointed in his destiny. He wanted to be an artist, and not only was not an artist, but was unable to find any leisure among the thousands of responsibilities which his fortune had thrust upon him. For the past couple of years, sensing that he was a prisoner to his money, he had been morose, irritable, and destructive. His present activities on the stock market were no more than the expression of a bitter resentment against fate, and particularly against the capitalistic régime which, he thought, was throttling him. Since he could not bring himself to throw his money away he had turned, temporarily, against the economic system out of which the money had been born. Here, therefore, was the phenomenon, never before witnessed in America, of a credit power reaching into the billions devoted to mere margin speculation. He could not control the market, but he could cause such violent eruptions as to disorganize its normal procedure. He had many smaller traders working with him, some of them in his confidence, many who did not so much as know his name but who followed him through the pages of his secret oracle, the *Morning Express*. His chief opponent in this career of destruction was Raphael Tarne; but even Tarne's eloquence had been unable, as yet, to harness Van Duyn's energies constructively.

Joe Herd sat slumped in one of the green leather chairs, with his legs stretched out before him, his elbows on the chair arms, and his fingers linked over his stomach; and this was barely an hour after he

had left Diana and Caroline with his threat. His face gave no indication of his excitement. He knew that Delaney wanted to marry Caroline for her money, and he knew that the only way to stop this was to break Jencks financially. He knew that immediate action was necessary, while the Herd estate was still tied up with the executors, for without the resources of that estate Mr. Jencks did not have the capital to sustain an attack on People's Boulevard; whereas, with the estate behind him, it would take whole years to cause his ruin. Joe's irons were hot, and his heart was hot also with the repression of thirteen years. But of all this there was no outward sign, except a kind of heavy breathing as he stared at the fireplace at his feet.

The door from the executive room opened explosively and Van Duyn entered. Joe flapped a chubby hand and said, "'Lo Van."

"What's up?" Van Duyn asked. He was running in high gear and Joe's apparent listlessness annoyed him. He had studied Herd at Tarne's. He thought Joe was too lazy to be of any use to him, and nevertheless he was one who could sense the energy latent in Joe's character. He had never expected this energy to be released, but as he crossed to the window now, and as Herd slowly arose and faced him, he saw right away that something had profoundly happened. He observed it in the thrust of the Herd neck.

"Well," Joe said, coming in on him like a boxer, "How'd you like to make some money?"

"Don't need it."

"Hunh. I do."

"How much do you want?"

"Hell, you got me wrong. I thought we might get Jencks to put on a little stunt for us."

Half of Joe's meaning seeped through his words and arrested Van Duyn's attention. "Lift the smoke screen," he said. "What do you want me to do?"

"Well you know that rumor 'bout Keystone and Bethlehem railroads."

"Merging. Yes. Is it a fact?"

"It will be," Joe said, "unless someone stops it."

"How do you know?"

"Remember what I told you once 'bout Jencks and this People's Boulevard?"

"Certainly."

"That property runs right into the Keystone cut and Uncle Will had to do somethin' 'bout it. He's got thick with some Keystone directors—George Monroe, Ellis, and F. M. Keynton, and some others. He has them and their débutante vestals in to dinner every so often. After dinner there's always a pow, and they let me sit in on them because I look so dumb. Now these guys 've sunk most of their personal funds into those roads, and they've got the merger all lined up to make th' biggest trunk line in th' world."

"I've noticed the buying," Van Duyn said. "I didn't know it was so sound."

"Well, it's sound, 'cept if you ask me I don't think they've got absolute control—not of Bethlehem anyhow. They keep countin' heads, which they wouldn't do if it was sure. But anyhow they've held th' stocks up."

"That's right. Those stocks never had a real drop."

"Not like some of your babies," Joe said.

"No." Van Duyn smiled absently. "Not like some of mine."

"Anyway," Joe said, "Jencks has taken a bunch of losses in other parts of the market and stuck his spare cash into Keystone and Elizabeth."

Van Duyn, who had flung himself into a chair, was looking at the ceiling, and from time to time hissed through his teeth, in a manner of his. "I suppose you want me to stop the merger."

"You spoke."

"What for?"

Joe cleared his throat. He had begun pacing the room with his hands behind his back. He stopped in front of Van Duyn with his legs apart. "You've heard of People's Development Corporation."

"P.D.Q.? Certainly. I'm short of it."

"Hunh." Joe grinned.

"What's the joke?"

"I was just goin' to suggest you buy it."

"Buy it! It's lousy." Van Duyn threw his head back again and communicated the rest of his thoughts to the ceiling.

"That's right. But listen. I remember you asked me once the name of the outfit that owns all those boulevard corporations."

"Yes."

"Well, it's P.D.Q."

"What!" Van Duyn sat up straight.

"Fact," Joe said. "When Jencks started buyin' the

boulevard three years ago those local units were owned by a concern called Washington Boulevard Corporation. He had trouble with this, dissolved it, and had the whole works taken over by P.D.Q. You must've noticed all those subsidiaries on the balance sheet."

"Of course. That's why I'm short of it. The Paulist Fathers' Something-or-other."

"Paulist Fathers' House and Traffic Welfare Association, Incorporated," Joe said.

"That's it. God!"

"There's forty of 'em like that," Joe said, "and they're all losin' on their investments."

"Certainly," Van Duyn said. "P.D.Q. can't possibly declare a dividend this spring.

"They're valuable though," Joe said. "People think they're just local real-estate firms, but they're all linked together into a potential whole."

"In other words—" Van Duyn hesitated a moment—"P.D.Q. owns a potential boulevard from Washington Street to Sixty-eighth."

"Check."

"And Jencks controls P.D.Q."

"Yeah. He and the Herd Realty Company."

Van Duyn sat back again.

"Each of the local corporations," Joe said, "is capitalized for a million. Four hundred thousand of that is bein' sold to private customers, or spooned out as gravy. Jencks and Delaney own one or two hundred thousand in each. The remainder is owned by P.D.Q., which took over about four hundred thousand in mortgages in return for fifty thousand shares

of stock at ten dollars. That's approximate for each one, but some of 'em have less."

"Clever," Van Duyn said.

"Maybe," Joe said. "But whether P.D.Q. comes out with a profit, or goes broke, depends on th' city. If the city takes the land off their hands there'll be an immense profit. If it doesn't the whole thing'll smash."

"Um."

"P.D.Q.," Joe said, "got a new charter when it took over the boulevard. It has about five million dollars liquid assets in the stock market. It used to be kept at the call desk, but now——"

Van Duyn looked at him intently.

"It's all in Keystone and Bethlehem," Joe said.

The millionaire jumped to his feet and began pacing.

"Now listen, Van."

"Well?" He had paused under the portrait of Napoleon.

"I want you to buy the whole outfit."

"What! My dear Joe——"

"Hold on. P.D.Q.'s worth fifty million." Joe was talking fast.

"Yes."

"Jencks is askin' eighty for the boulevard—it's worth fifty."

"There you are," Van Duyn said. "A hundred million——"

"I'll get control of the whole works for you for fifteen!" Joe shouted.

"Eh?"

"That's my top price," Joe said.

Van Duyn paced for a moment and then he suddenly crossed to his desk and picked up the telephone. "Get me John Claypoole right away," he said. "And if he isn't home where is he?" He threw the instrument back on to its hook and faced Joe. "How much cash has Jencks actually sunk into that street?"

"'Bout eighteen million," Joe said.

"In what forms?"

"Well, there's 'bout six million in contracts to purchase, 'bout seven million in titles, one or two million laid down where he expected to get mortgages and couldn't, loss of rentals 'nother half million. Make it eighteen."

The telephone buzzed. Joe listened to the following half of a conversation:

"Yeah? All right. Hello John this is Van. Yeah, what the hell you sound half asleep. You were, eh? Well concentrate with those Kantian cells of yours. Don't get fresh. What I want to know is can you get a majority control of Bethlehem for me. Bethlehem Railroad, you sap! The milk you were brought up on. You haven't? no I know that, but how much do you need?" There was a pause while the receiver squeaked. "Well how about those other Philadelphia buddies of yours? Well, the proposition is to stop that merger with Keystone. Yes, stop it. No, now listen. I don't want 'em to merge. Let me talk, will you! I've got to have a little decline in Bethlehem it's absolutely necessary and all I want is to delay the merger about six months. I'll guarantee you my profits on the short side and at the end of six months she'll merge any-

way. You'll win double Oh to hell with him! It isn't going to merge and you're going to stop it—little old J.C. with the frozen ears. You'll find out in the *Express* to-morrow. Well a rich young man like you ought to. You can come up to Tarne's to-night and talk it over. Yeah. Swell. Bring your dope and I'll bring mine."

He returned the receiver. "He's the largest stockholder of Bethlehem," he said to Joe, pacing again. "His father used to be president and there's sobs of it in the family. He says his cousin's just died and his uncle's executor of the estate, and his uncle's sick and has left everything to John to handle. That's more or less typical of the whole family. The trouble will be to talk him into this. It seems they've approached him already and he's stated his approval of the merger. He's scared of his uncle, too. Um. He and his uncle together only need about fifty thousand to control. I'll figure it exactly to-night, but it'll be a squeeze. What do you think?"

"If you squeeze it your way you'll make some money."

"I don't want money. What the hell? I could sell at to-morrow's opening. But it'll be a hard stock to get on loan. They've scared the shorts out of it, though. Maybe I could." He crossed to the telephone. "Get me Mr. Gale, Jr." he said.

"What's the use of your goin' short?" Joe said. "Claypoole can pick it up. There's four months yet."

"Maybe," Van Duyn said, "but I might as well jar loose some of the small accounts. I want some fun anyway." The telephone buzzed. "Hello. Hello

Harry? Van. Say Hotspur how much Bethlehem 've you got over in your stables? Lot eh? I'll want to borrow some to-morrow. Yes I am." Harry squeaked into the receiver. "Little man," Van Duyn said, "there's just one time to sell, and that's when they're strong; and there's just one time to buy, and that's when they're weak. So long. See you at Tarne's."

He flipped the receiver back onto the hook. There was silence while he paced the floor, scowling. "There won't be much of it lying around loose, though," he mumbled, "on voting day." Presently his face became radiant. He stopped in front of Joe, with his legs apart and his hands behind his back. "Gee," he cried, like a child in a roller coaster, "this is great!"

Diana and Caroline stared at each other across the definite click that the door had made, closing behind Joe. Mrs. Jencks scrutinized the fine spokes of Caroline's brown eyes; the curly brown bobbed hair; the somewhat thin face, whose cheek bones, higher than normal ones, would some day express great feminine dignity; the angular cast of the shoulders and chest under the jade green kimono. Caroline was not as beautiful as she herself had been as Delaney's mistress. For a moment time collapsed, and she was in the presence of the young lieutenant and of herself fifteen years ago. Life had never allowed her to outlive the consequences of that, but had so utterly crushed down the memory of her pleasure in Delaney, and the romance of him, that, for several minutes, it was difficult for her to understand why

Caroline had allowed him to make love to her. For Diana knew that this had happened. She sat with her hands clasped tightly on her lap, realizing that the long truce between Delaney and herself, the balanced power, was about to be destroyed.

Caroline was the first to speak. "What do you suppose he's going to do, Mother?"

"Joe?"

"Yes."

They were both frightened.

"He might do anything," Diana said. "He's very headstrong."

Caroline cleared her throat. "Mother."

"Yes, dear."

"You aren't very pleased—are you——"

Diana hesitated only a moment. "I must be frank with you, Caroline," she said. "I don't think that John is worthy of you. I don't think that he's the man that you ought to marry, and I don't think you ought to have allowed—anything—to happen."

Caroline appeared surprised. "You know what's happened?"

"I believe I do."

A smile, characteristically ironic, spread over Caroline's eager face. "Do I give myself away that easily?"

"No dear, of course not. I've merely suspected and of course I haven't said anything—because I didn't know. I had no idea it was John——"

"What's so terrible about John?" Caroline asked, more at ease now.

"You naturally wouldn't know what kind of a

man he is," Diana said. "I suppose he's gotten more women into trouble——"

"But I don't mind that!" She was smiling again, confidently.

"You know, dear," Diana said earnestly, "I don't often agree with Joe, but in this case I do—absolutely. Both Joe and I know a—woman—John convinced her that he loved her—just as he's convinced you. Her life has been nothing but tragedy because of him. He hasn't the slightest bit of decency, Caroline, in his dealings with women. He'll promise them —anything—and never, never live up to what he says. I can see that he must be a very charming man—that way—a charming lover. I don't blame you at all, my dear; but I am warning you—from the bottom of my heart—to leave him alone. He'll make a wreck out of your life."

Caroline was thoughtful for several seconds, looking out of her window from the couch. Presently she said, "This is all very mysterious. Joe wouldn't give any reasons either."

"Neither Joe nor I can tell what we know," Diana said. "All we can do is to assure you that you're making the greatest mistake of your life."

"Has this anything to do with money?" Caroline asked.

"Money? No dear. It's John's character——"

"I *love* his character!" Caroline cried suddenly, sitting up in the couch. "I don't care what you all say about him, he's charming and delightful. What difference does the past make? I know all about his past. I know he's no angel. I don't want an angel.

I'm sick of the bunch of collegiates I've grown up with, and I want a man that's had the nerve to get himself into a little trouble. If he's made other women miserable, what do I care? Women always gripe. I'll bet he made them happy as hell for a while, and that's all I ask of any man!" She looked at Delaney's former mistress defiantly.

Diana was helpless, as older people always are when faced with the will power of the young. There is nothing so final as the "I want" or the "I don't want" of a child. You cannot argue with it at all. Your only weapons are violence, or a trained knowledge of psychology. In Diana's case violence was out of the question, because she was protecting her own past; because she could not bear, after thirteen years of silence, to have the motives of Frank Herd's suicide revealed. She was tangled in a net of human wills: Caroline's will to marry John, Joe's will to stop the marriage, John's will to exploit whoever fell into his power, her husband's will to believe good of all men, and most of all, her own will to maintain the position, the advantages, the beauty, and the power that she had. There could be no violence.

She was by no means trained in the modern concepts of psychology, yet she instinctively saved her situation for the present by offering no more resistance to Caroline. She knew well enough that love is the more overpowering, the more it has to struggle against opposition; and she deprived Caroline of considerable pleasure, at this moment, by making no answer to her defense of John Delaney. She forced Caroline to speak.

"Don't you see, Mother? I don't care about the future. I've been cooped up all my life in Father's ideas. I haven't ever had a chance to get to know myself. I don't want security, I want life. If John leaves me in the future that's up to him and me, isn't it? Right now I know he loves me, and that's all I ask. He must love me, Mother. Don't you think a woman can tell?"

The remark suffocated Diana. Oh yes, a woman can tell! but never honestly, never dispassionately. Thinking of this, and noticing Caroline's young, smooth fingers, Diana was conscious of her own forty years and was aghast at her own wisdom. She had not wanted to be wise, once, either. What could you do about this?

She arose, since she was afraid of any further words. She realized that she could never convince Caroline, for she had to hide away all her true emotions about John. She smiled nervously. "If you feel that way, dear, I'm sure there's nothing for me to say. I could only warn you. I think Joe will make a great deal of trouble about this. In fact, I think Joe's present mood is very dangerous——"

"But what can Joe do?"

Diana did not like to think what Joe could do, and yet Caroline's question forced her to realize that Joe held the key to the past. For a moment their eyes met and Caroline was shocked by the almost hostile glare in the gray softness of Diana's.

"I'll talk to Joe—and find out," Diana said. "Good-bye, dear."

"Oh by the way," Caroline said, sitting straight

up on the couch just as Diana opened the door. "John will be here in a little while. He's taking me—out to tea——"

"Oh—yes——"

"You might be nice to him," Caroline said, a little severely, as if she were talking to a child.

Diana returned to her room, agitated by the most obscure emotions. She was not aware that she was ashamed, but her conscious feeling was one of distaste for her situation, and this quickly became Delaney's fault. His affair with Caroline was certainly not tasteful. She found herself shocked, and yet she knew that she must overcome this, since neither Caroline nor Delaney would be impressed by it. She realized that she could accomplish nothing here by her emotions; that they would have to be hidden, as always, under her mask of beauty in repose. She was tired of the mask, but it was the only successful one she had ever found. People expected her to be beautiful, and she sensed that if she contradicted their expectations, by any slightest action, the world, and particularly her family, would have a strong case against her. She was not allowed to love or hate to excess. She was a social symbol, and in so far as she had failed to live up to the requirements (a few times in her life) she was indictable by anyone who chose to inform against her. With Delaney she had once, for a few months, been more than a mere doll. Her husband's discovery of this had caused his suicide. That was unjust. The present attitude of Joe, enforcing that ancient injustice upon her, was doubly unjust. Caroline had just cried that

all her life she had been cooped up in her father's ideas. Poor Caroline! She did not yet know that all her life she must be cooped up in something; a piece of social property, with no honest will of her own.

Immersed in these reflections, Mrs. Jencks had a sudden insight, such as will come only in the last moments of self-defense. She picked up the telephone and told the butler that when Mr. Delaney arrived he should be sent up to her room at once. For it was obvious that John was the only person who would indulge her emotions. He had done so once, he would do it again; because, between them, no matter how many years had gone by, there had been a frank human feeling—only a few hours' expression of it, perhaps, but clear hours—to gain no other end but themselves. She hated John for all the grief he had caused, and yet she knew that she could spend five minutes with him without her mask.

At five o'clock he knocked on her door.

Having closed the door behind him, he stopped. He knew that she was afraid of him and that fear is the least honest of the emotions. She was lying on the couch, and he saw, as she extended her small hand from her wide lacy sleeve, that she had staged the interview carefully. She was indeed beautiful. Not only did she have a natural talent for Paris clothes, which she had exercised ever since he had known her, but the piquancy of her face, the make-up of her lips and eyes, and many of her gestures were genuinely French. She had gone to school in Paris and she spoke the language easily. These virtues had dazzled him once, but now that he was

used to them they made him vaguely suspicious, and emphasized, what might otherwise have remained remote, that Diana lived for nothing but the expression of her person—of her body, one would almost say. Her ego was identified with this, and her heart sworn to nothing but this in the world.

"Hello," she said, seeming to caress her words with her throat, richening them. "I understand that I'm supposed to be nice to you."

He took her hand; and there was something in her attitude which caused him to bow over and kiss the fingers of it.

"And who has been my ambassador?" he said.

"Caroline."

Even though he had anticipated this, he was a little stunned by the directness of it. He did not realize that he was already caught in a trap—the trap of playing a game, of striking a pose which her pose was daring him to strike.

"Caroline has told me," he said, "that she is fond of me. And yet I never expected so great a favor from her as this."

"Won't you get yourself a chair?"

He turned to get the chair, and just as he picked it up she said, "I have much less pleasant instructions to you from Joe."

"Oh—ah——" He set the chair down and turned to her. "What do you mean?"

She did not answer, but rather coldly motioned to him to carry the chair over closer to her. When he was seated she said, "There's no use in our arguing between ourselves, John. You can't have any

doubt about my opinion of this latest manifestation of your power over women. I don't think it was necessary to prove to me that women will do anything for you—I really think it was bad taste."

"See here now, Diana——"

"Just a minute, please. I know you'll protest that you're madly in love with Caroline, and I'm not even going to try to convince you that you aren't. I say there's no use in our arguing. I know you pretty well, and you know me. What I want to convince you of is the danger—of doing what you are doing. I'll tell you right now that Joe won't stand for it. Joe is not only going to tell Caroline about us, he'll tell Willard. I know better than anyone what Joe is capable of, because I've spent a lot of my life with the Herds. He won't have any mercy on anyone because he's got an insane delusion about his father. If you go ahead with this, John, you're going to ruin your life, to say nothing of mine and Willard's and Caroline's. I'm not appealing to you on any other grounds. I might pretend to be shocked, but I'm not shocked, and you know it. I might pretend to be jealous, which you probably think is the case; but I'm not jealous. I really don't care, John, whom you marry, or whether you marry at all. I'm simply telling you, what I know to be true, that Joe will fight this marriage to the very bottom of his heart." She raised herself on her elbow. "To the very bottom of his heart," she repeated, meeting his eyes directly with hers.

At first angry, and prepared to defend himself violently, Delaney was now suddenly caught into

the personality of her eyes, which had not looked at him this way for thirteen years. He had not seen her alive for thirteen years. He was appalled by this sudden appearance of her, as if from the dead. He was awed by a realization of what her daily life must be, with this personality suppressed. And she was so intensely beautiful! Delaney clenched his fist.

"My God," he whispered into her eyes, "you are so beautiful, Diana!"

She glanced down at her hands quickly, and then returned to him. "Do you think I am beautiful?"

He was trapped. "Beautiful?" he whispered. "I have always thought so."

Diana stared at her hands without a word.

Making no effort to collect the braggadocio which he had expected to assume, Delaney allowed himself to become saturated in this mysterious harmony which she had conjured from the past. He cleared his throat, fumbled for a few words.

Diana looked up at him. "No man will ever see me—beautifully—again," she said.

He put out his hand and laid it on the back of hers. He could not help feeling the thin loose texture of the gown on her lap as he did so. His veins burned. He had forgotten, perhaps, how subtle and feline she could be. She was so much wiser than—a younger girl. Yet there was nothing sensual in this placing of his hand on hers. It was as if he were laying his hand on the past, to bless it.

Diana drew her fingers away slowly. "I think Caroline is probably waiting for you," she whispered.

"But Diana, I would like to explain——"

She had changed in a flash. Her face grew cold and it hardened perceptibly. He saw that she was forty years old. "What would you like to explain?"

"I—eh—why, I want to explain how I feel——"

She raised her hand. "Haven't I just shown you that no explanation is needed? I will never accept an explanation from you. If you ruin me, you ruin yourself. There is nothing in that to *explain*."

The mask had fallen across her face, he felt, forever. What an amazing commentary on life with Willard Jencks! Delaney really wanted to comfort her.

"Diana——"

"Will you please leave?"

"Eh——"

"I tell you, Caroline is waiting for you."

He stared at her a moment, preparing to speak, but unable to find words, since he did not know what he wanted to say. He bowed his head and left her sitting on the couch behind her mask. He was considerably stunned. His life seemed complicated, the motives of it confused. He did not guess that this was the effect she had wanted to produce; but guessed only—manlike—that she was jealous of Caroline. The thought at first made him smile, then caused him to stop in the hall above the sitting room and lean against the wall. He could hear Caroline at the piano downstairs. Perhaps it was true that he needed an older woman. They are more subtle. They are cleverer. There is a quality of beauty for which the language has no word, that a woman needs years to develop; it is the ultimate of a man's desires, per-

haps. Delaney touched his forehead with a silk handkerchief. Dammit! He was too old to play Don Juan; he wanted a wife, and, specifically, a young woman who would enjoy spending money and discovering things. But if he should let Caroline go now it would not be because he was afraid of Joe, but because —why, the woman was a witch! What the devil? Was she in fact jealous of Caroline? He was bewildered, and could not tell what was truth and what was sham as he descended the stairs.

Caroline was sitting gloomily alone, with her fingers on the keys, the lines of her forehead raised, her lips somewhat puckered with thought. She looked up as Delaney came through the door.

"Hello boy friend," she said. "What did Mother have to say?"

"Oh—oh——" he said. "She gave me her blessing."

And damn these women anyway, John Delaney thought.

It was eleven o'clock before Joe finished outlining his ideas to Rap Tarne, and during this time Van Duyn had not been able to sit still, but kept pacing the long floor of the studio. Hobbs and John Claypoole were there (they had been classmates at college), Harry Gale, and Dr. Chance. As Joe proceeded to the details Van Duyn stepped up and interrupted him.

"You've given me a lot of talk lately, Rap," he said, apropos of nothing that Joe was discussing, "about all of us acting as a group. I'm sold on this

idea of Joe's, but since I promised to submit my next important decision to discussion here—well, here it is. What's the matter with it?"

"The matter with it," Tarne said, crossing his legs heavily, "is that it's a hundred per cent. destructive."

"What does that mean, please?"

Tarne settled himself for an attack. "Well, here you are," he said, "the richest man in America. Anyway, you're the richest of your generation. America happens to be built on capital, or credit rather, and consequently you may be said to be the most capitalized, or the most credited, man in the nation. For the past several years you've done nothing but attempt to deny this primary fact, which is a fact that you can't deny without committing suicide. You have, I may say, more ways of committing suicide than most of us, and it's useless for you to tell me that that's bad luck. You can commit suicide through your fortune, which is immense, or through your talents, which are considerable. You can lose this credit of yours, allowing it to be distributed into a few thousand parts, or you can give it away to people less able to handle it than yourself, or you can simply set out to double it by any means. Those are all forms of suicide for you, Van, because your job is to learn how to *convert*. You can't create. You haven't any medium of expression, the way the doctor has for instance." Tarne flapped his hand at Dr. Chance. "You've tried to write, you've tried to paint, you've tried to loaf, you've tried to wantonly double your capital; and all those attempts were

just ways of avoiding the main job to which you've been born. Your most recent escape has been the deliberate destruction of anyone in your vicinity who appears to have a solution for his life. You didn't want National Garden Foods, but you ruined Masters to get it——"

"Because Masters was full of hot air," Van Duyn snapped. His eyes were bloodshot, which was always the case when anyone attacked him.

"Maybe. But Masters had an ideal, and that's why you destroyed him."

"Yes," Van Duyn cried, "and Jencks has an ideal too, if you want to call it that. I'm surprised at you, Rap, to hear you talking about these sob experts as if they were really idealists. Can't you see what a poison these men are? There's thousands of 'em. They've read Henry Ford and they're making millions out of his business philosophy. They bust into the periodicals as saviors of humanity, up-builders of the nation, captains of industry. Saviors and captains hell! I'll save humanity before they've begun to understand it. They're milking the great national Cow and any one of 'em'll tell you they're doing her a service because she likes to be milked. What's Rotary? What's Kiwanis? Free advertisement! Ego food! God, it makes me sick to see them bloating themselves on fake humanitarianism, fake service, fake religion, fake benevolence. D'you think Joseph Steele would found scientific laboratories if it didn't advertise his automobiles? D'you think Jencks would educate the public in housing conditions if it wasn't selling lots for him at a profit? Ser-

vice! My chauffeur renders service." He stood over Tarne and shook his finger violently. "But I tell you, Rap, a capitalist cannot *serve*. A capitalist is fundamentally and necessarily selfish, and I'm the only major capitalist in this nation that's got the guts to admit it. There's always the eye of the needle!" he cried, bending toward Tarne. "The eye of the needle! Anyone who's got so much money that it's become *power* can't get through it. His ego's too fat!" Van Duyn suddenly shoved his hands into his trousers pockets and walked away.

"I suppose you're going to change all that by grabbing Jencks's boulevard for yourself," Tarne said.

"Not at all. The point is I *know* I'm selfish. Jencks thinks he's Christ." Van Duyn spread his hands and shrugged. "What the hell?"

"But you're just after saying that you're the *only* millionaire in America who admits this supreme egotism."

"Yes. I'll say it again, shall I?"

"I suppose then," Tarne said with a smile, "that your logical conduct is to destroy the United States to prove that you're selfish."

"Don't sophisize."

"That might be a wonderful word," Tarne said, "but it doesn't exist."

"It says what I mean."

"Now wait awhile," Joe said. "It's perfectly obvious everybody acts in his own interests."

"Well, why do you think you've got any right to do this to Willard Jencks?" Tarne demanded.

"Because I don't like him."

"That's right," Dr. Chance said. "If you boys would stick closer to the plate you'd make a hit once in a while. What's the difference whether capitalists are selfish or not? The point is, do we want Willard Jencks to continue in the real-estate business or do we want him to quit?"

"I want him to quit," Joe said.

"You perhaps don't understand," Tarne said, "that this is supposed to be a discussion and not a statement of blind passions."

"I'm not in any blind passion 't all," Joe said. "Jencks is out. If you guys don't want to help me I can do it m'self."

Hobbs started talking. "I see a compromise here," he said, "that ought to suit everybody. Let Van and Herd start right in on Jencks. As I understand it, the idea is only to take the boulevard away from him anyway. Once you've got the boulevard——"

"Turn it over to the city!" Van Duyn cried. "Hobbs, I'll give you a thousand dollars for a new idea."

"I don't need one," Hobbs said, "because this idea is really a solution to our difficulty. Van and Joe get their boulevard, bust their man, and nothing is really destroyed. You agreed with me some time ago, Rap, after we first heard about it, that this ought to be a municipal thing."

"Yes, I did," Tarne said. "And I wouldn't have so much objection to your idea, Hobbs. Not at all."

"Jencks can't finish the boulevard now anyway," Joe said, pressing his temporary advantage. "With the Realty Company tied up he has no back-log."

"So that in the end," Hobbs said, "it might be argued that we're saving the boulevard for the city."

"You sap!" Van Duyn shouted. "If that isn't just the way Willard Jencks himself would argue, if he wanted to bust something. You all make me sick sitting around gassing about what you want to do with *my* money. It's the old stuff all over again. Communists and I.W.W. and people in Greenwich Village always know what millionaires ought to do, which is why they aren't millionaires themselves. Now I'm not going into this thing unless I make some money out of it. That's flat! I've got an expensive plant to run, and I hope I've explained to you how I'm *not* out to serve humanity."

Joe saved the situation. "I'll make you some money," he said. "What 'n hell you worryin' 'bout? You can't help makin' money. If Claypoole stops this Bethlehem merger for us you'll make money all th' way down from heaven."

"Four times which, it might enlighten that crusty brain of yours to realize, Claypoole will be losing. And how the hell's he ever goin' to sell it?"

"I really don't want to sell it," John Claypoole said unexpectedly. "It's always been in the family, you see."

Claypoole was a small chap with cropped brown hair, a sharp nose, and high forehead. There was a mysterious expression of alert shyness on his face. Joe understood that he was older than he looked, but was not particularly impressed with him.

"Exactly," Van Duyn said. "Whatever profits I

make short of Bethlehem and Keystone will of course go to John."

"I'm afraid my uncle will raise the devil," Claypoole said, "when he finds out what's happened."

"I wish your uncle was all I had to worry about," Van Duyn said.

"Now wait a minute," Joe said. "There's a pile of money in this, Van, and you know it. P.D.Q.'s sellin' around fifty. If you begin to give it some publicity, and show up those subsidiaries, and play up th' fact that she's apt to pass her next dividend, she'll flop to forty easy. Now I'll go right out into th' boulevard district and pick up some of Jencks's mortgages, and maybe even a little property, if there's any left. I think there's some second mortgages that're 'bout due, and I'll get these and won't renew 'em. He'll have to pay cash. Anyway, if I get a million dollars' worth of liens I can go to th' city and want an investigation. I c'n want to know what it's all about down my way. I c'n get the I.R.T. on my side. We'll freeze that boulevard, and th' first thing you know Jencks'll run out of cash. If you drive off both P.D.Q. and Bethlehem he'll have to sell one or th' other. If we work it right he'll have t' sell both. My bet is that you can buy up a control of P.D.Q. under thirty. Then you can make a new municipal proposition to th' city and cash in on all that land, which would give P.D.Q. advertisement and 'nough liquid assets to send th' stock back up to fifty again. Hell, there's millions on th' way down and there's millions on th' way up."

Van Duyn continued to pace, hissing to himself.

Tarne took a long drink. Hobbs sat forward with his elbows on his knees, visualizing the campaign. Joe had rather exhausted himself with all those words, but sat back with satisfaction, realizing that his proposition was sold.

"That," Van Duyn said decisively, stopping in front of Tarne, "is exactly what we're going to do."

"My dear Van," Tarne said, "I've already stated my objections."

Van Duyn turned to Claypoole. "Now how about it, John?"

"Well," Claypoole said. "I've already told Mr. Keynton that I thought the merger was a good idea."

"You didn't sign anything, did you?"

"No——"

"Well, you've changed your mind."

"I know. But then there's Uncle David."

"To hell with him. He'll think he's Crœsus."

"I know, Van, but this is an estate. You don't seem to realize that. If the stock goes way down Uncle David might think he ought to sell it."

"Let him talk to me. I'll show him why he oughtn't to sell it."

"And the law——"

"I'll protect him from the law!" Van Duyn was standing over Claypoole majestically.

"Well——"

"Are you with us?"

"Yes. All right," Claypoole said. "I can't get it all at once though, can I?"

"You need anything over fifty thousand shares.

No. Stewart Jones'll tell you how to do it. I'd like you to get thirty thousand to-morrow, but you mustn't send the market up on me. I've got to feel out the loaning situation before I sell too much short. She'll go way off at the opening. Jones'll tell you when to buy. He's got a good ear." Van Duyn turned to Gale. "Harry, can you——"

Harry Gale had fallen asleep, with his long curved nose hung over his chest. Van Duyn looked at him sarcastically for a moment, then shrugged and walked away. "That's my chief broker," he said. He crossed to the telephone on Tarne's desk. "Grosvenor 2000."

Tarne had been studying Joe. "Has your grandfather's death got anything to do with all of this?"

"Yeah," Joe said. "It might have."

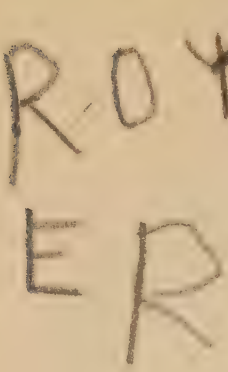
"Did Niehlson really murder him?"

"No, he didn't. I'm goin' t' straighten that out too," Joe said.

"Hello," Van Duyn said into the phone. "*Morning Express*? Managing editor, please. Number twenty-seven speaking."

There was a brief pause.

"Hello, Cohen. This is Van. Yeah. Cohen, you can release that story I gave you about Bethlehem and Keystone. Yeah. Good-night."


ROYRDG
ER

PART IV

Even three months later, in April, John Delaney had not recovered from that interview with Diana. The knowledge that she was a different person than she appeared to be, disturbed him. For some indefinite reason he had allowed his marriage to Caroline to be deferred until June. He was not afraid of Joe, and he was not the one to alter his private plans for a young man recently expelled from Yale University. Nor was he exactly afraid of Diana, knowing that she was afraid of him. Nor was he exactly certain that he wanted Caroline, since Diana's revelation of herself. He drifted in a confusion of motives. For the first time in many years he was not sure of his direction.

Concerning Joe, however, he had discovered a good deal that was definite. Caroline had remarked that Joe was leaving the house at seven-thirty every morning. Delaney thought about this for several days, and then confided his suspicions to Mr. Jencks, who was shocked at first, and then incredulous. Joe was too incompetent to damage them, Willard said; he was half crazy, and Mr. Jencks would have him

examined by a psycho-analyst if these early-morning exits continued. However, Delaney hired detectives; discovered that Herd went to an obscure office on West Forty-second Street every day, and that much of his time was spent visiting real-estate agencies and property owners. What made the evidence conclusive, if merely circumstantial, was that all these visits occurred in the direct path of the boulevard; so that John was constrained to assume that Joe was working out some obscure scheme of revenge of which only those green eyes would be capable. Was there not some connection between Joe's activity and the difficulty of renewing the second mortgages on boulevard properties, which had been given two years ago and were now falling due? Delaney thought there was. He had written out a case against Joe this very afternoon, and had slipped it into his coat pocket, to be presented to Willard at the first favorable opportunity.

As usual, he left his office about four-thirty and went directly to a small apartment on East Seventy-sixth Street which, under the name of Root, he had rented for himself and Caroline. They were in the habit of meeting each other here every afternoon at five. John himself would stay to dress for dinner, which he usually took at the Jencks residence. He found tea laid out by the maid who took care of the apartment during the day. He lit the alcohol lamp under the kettle and got himself a drink from the closet. The more he thought about Joe the more certain he was that Diana's warning was sound. The boy was actually a fiend, and he had

been the same way about his father's suicide. Could he be arrested? Delaney wondered. There was the Niehlson motif running through the past four months, and he remembered that Joe had had something to say about that. Niehlson's trial had been mysteriously remanded a couple of times. Delaney had long ago closed up that Intercity deal, with a profit to Grandfather's estate of five hundred thousand dollars, and knew that Joe could not damage him from that angle. Nevertheless, the trial of Niehlson could produce a lot of undesirable publicity; there might be dynamite stored in it, if Joe's motive was sufficiently profound. Delaney knew him pretty thoroughly, and remembered him as a silent, evil, cigarette-smoking kid at Greenwich. Dynamite? Well, if Diana was right, if Joe was jealous of Caroline, that would be dynamite enough. . . .

It was not that he wanted to save People's Boulevard—that was not an ideal with him at all. He did not like business; he wanted to spend the next fifteen years exploring the world, preferably in his own yacht and with a charming young wife. He wanted also to hunt game in Africa, and he had always had a craving for the Himalayas. Returning to this country at fifty-five, he wanted to settle down on an estate in Louisiana—his native soil—shoot ducks and keep dogs. He had already accumulated a part of the necessary fortune for this kind of life, and he had no desire to see it swept away by a collapse of P.D.Q. He had considered selling his holdings secretly; but since this would impair Mr. Jencks's control of the corporation, he was

afraid to do it; and besides, the boulevard and its immense profits were still possibilities.

And even more disquieting than Joe's activities against the boulevard, was the action of the stock market, which had never quite recovered from the crash last spring. A group of bears, whose identity no one could exactly ascertain, were in the habit of rushing certain issues unexpectedly, causing brief declines and jangling the nerves of bull speculators. Bethlehem Railroad, in which many of the cash assets of P.D.Q. were invested, had been raided in this way, and so violently that small accounts had been thrown onto the market at a sacrifice. At the same time, P.D.Q. was being given a lot of publicity by someone who knew its secrets. The stock was now just above forty, and rather weak at that price. Mr. Jencks said that this was quite natural because, in its present condition, P.D.Q. was a speculation. But John did not trust people as Willard did. He felt that someone was double crossing them —the Keystone directors, or Packer of the National Garden Foods, or one of the estate managers whom Mr. Jencks had taken into his confidence and who knew enough about real estate to estimate how closely into the wind P.D.Q. was hauled. But above all he suspected Joe of having lined himself up with the bears, and of supplying them with information about People's, obtained by some underhanded means of his own.

He leaned up against the mantelpiece, brooding, with his drink tilted in his hand. If the city should

buy the boulevard Joe would get stung; but supposing Joe had some drag with the city? The possibilities of this were enormously disquieting to a man of forty who was trying to collect enough money from an erratic stock market to tour the world in a private yacht. To be sure, he was short of some stocks; but his fifty thousand P.D.Q., which represented the bulk of his fortune, had depreciated nearly five hundred thousand dollars since Joe's return from Yale, and could not be sold without breaking with Willard Jencks. That is some measure of how much Delaney hated Joe; and some excuse for his desire to have Joe arrested and locked up, no matter on what grounds, until the affairs of P.D.Q. could be protected, by Grandfather's money, from his destructive hand.

He was still slouched against the mantel when Caroline arrived.

She smiled and crossed the room gracefully, and let him put his arms around her and kiss her fresh mouth. He had come to love her exceedingly—a charming kid with a quick tongue and enveloping brown eyes. When he had kissed her he patted her shoulder. "The kettle will be boiling in a minute," he said, knowing that she liked her tea right away.

"That's good." She looked around the room impersonally and then went into the bedroom. He heard her humming to herself in there.

Caroline was more deeply affected than she cared to admit, by Joe's opposition to her marriage. On the whole, her father had been the only person to

tell her that he was pleased. He had had some secret reservations, but after all it would be a magnificent marriage and what did Puss want for a wedding present? This was irritating; she had set out to eliminate the Jencks from her life, but instead of shocking her father she had won his approval. Several times, after discovering this, she had tried to tell him that she was John's mistress. But what a schoolgirl kind of a thing to say! What did it matter whether her father knew or not? She had broken from the Jencks customs by living in this apartment with John, and the fact that the affair would become so respectable in June merely proved, perhaps, that one cannot escape oneself in the end. She dried her hands energetically and inspected her face in the bathroom mirror. That new kind of eye-shadow paste was successful in blue. Sophia Cox had sent it to her from Paris, although Caroline never used it without wondering why women are not born with these necessary shadows under their eyes. As I have said, she was Sophia's daughter: hence the difference between her father's approval of her marriage, on the one hand, and the gloomy attitude of Joe and Diana on the other, impressed her keenly. The question led her more deeply into the affairs of the family than she had ever ventured before. She understood that she and her father—the Jenckses—had been shut out by the Herds from some fact of the past, some event involving Delaney which the Herds did not wish to have disclosed. Under the circumstances you could not very well expect her to guess the truth; but she was beginning to feel that

the balance of power, which each of them, including Grandfather, had struggled to obtain, was now held secretly by Joe. In subterranean ways they were afraid of Joe, the ineffectual, whose resentment for whatever it was in the past had been smoldering for years. As she touched her cheek with powder, leaning over the dressing table in her room, she decided to obtain the origin of this mystery from John, and, the better to effect her purpose, drew from the dressing table a magnificent string of pearls which he had given her the day that she had promised to become his wife.

Standing at the fireplace with his hands in his pockets, he watched her enter the room in a green afternoon dress and green shoes. She settled herself into a chair, still impersonally.

"John, why does Joe hate you?"

He smiled, as if the beauty of her body seating itself had called up an ironical mood. "Why does Joe hate me?" He paused. "Do you care very much?"

"Is that an answer?" She looked at the bookcase on her right as if to decide what volumes it lacked.

"I see that you do care a good deal," John said, tapping his foot once on the hearth.

"John, that red shade is too awful. It looks like an interior in Astoria."

"All right—yes it does, rather. What color would you like?"

"Green," Caroline said. "It isn't a question, you see, of my *car*ing whether Joe hates you or not.

It's just that I haven't been able to escape the conclusion, in the last month or so, that you and Joe and Mother know something that Dad doesn't know." She looked at him squarely for the first time since entering the room. "Naturally I'm curious," she said, with a faint twist of her lips.

He was not at all nervous. "Nothing in it," he said.

"But why does Joe hate you?"

"Well, in a way, I've got the position that Joe might think he ought to have," John said. "I mean in the business, of course. No doubt he thinks he ought to be president of the Finance Corporation. That's reasonable, I think."

"That's bunk," Caroline said.

"Oh well." Delaney shrugged.

They were silent. Caroline seemed to inspect the silver design in the yellow wall paper; the angle of a Chinese Chippendale, which was supposed to be against the wall; the golden tassel of the table cover.

"Joe doesn't give a damn about the business," she said.

"That's not quite true," Delaney said. "You don't know him as well as I do, or you wouldn't say that."

Caroline looked him over at her ease. What was he talking about? What did he know about Joe that she did not know? She decided not to take up his challenge, as if she were not interested in what he knew.

"He's missed out," John said, thinking of the detective's report in his pocket. "People who don't get what they want, hate it." Then he turned and

stood looking down at the fireplace with his back to her.

"But he never did like you," Caroline said. "Not even years ago."

Delaney turned. "What's the matter with you this afternoon, anyway?"

Caroline raised her forehead and pulled one corner of her mouth lower than the other. Then she sat back crookedly in her chair.

Delaney's blue-gray eyes followed the lines of her body to her feet, and then returned to her face again. "You've got something on your mind," he said. "Why not come through with it?"

"Give me a cigarette."

He took one from a jade box and handed it to her.

"Thanks." She sat back again. She had her legs bunched under her. She looked up at him, serious-eyed, through the smoke of her first puff. "You might as well tell me all about it." His eyes were somewhat chaotic, and for the first time she felt him to be antagonistic. "We're not going any further until you do," she said, tapping her cigarette before there were any ashes to tap.

"You mean——"

"Just that," she said.

They were referring to their marriage.

"Well really, Caroline——" he shrugged, with his hands still in his pockets and his coat sticking out on both sides. "You threaten that way so often that I begin to feel you don't want to marry me."

"That's idiotic," she said. "But at the same time,

I'm sick of all this mystery. I'm not going to marry mystery."

"I've offered to tell you about my past, but you've always shut me off, you know——"

"Your past is obvious," Caroline said.

"Thank you." He bowed and half turned away.

"But there's something between you and Joe, and I wouldn't think of marrying you until I know what it is."

"Joe's jealous of me."

"Why?"

"I've just been telling you, Caroline."

"No," she said. "It isn't business."

"How do you know?"

"You admit I'm right."

"Certainly not."

"Well, I know I am."

"Very well."

"There's been some woman between you," Caroline said tersely. "Your whole attitude makes that obvious."

Delaney looked at her steadily then, and advanced slowly. "That's not so."

Caroline smiled sarcastically. "Every word you say proves it."

"Naturally—if you insist on proving it."

"All I insist on," Caroline cried suddenly, "is a little honesty!" She arose, and although she did not push him away, there seemed to be an invisible ring around her, so that he was forced backward. She walked past him to the fireplace. "There's something wrong in that house!" Her eyes stared at him.

"There's something going on that my father isn't supposed to know about! It's like a ghost. Sometimes I feel it walking up and down in the very room. Maybe it's an idea, but it's alive when we're all sitting around. I've seen Joe's eyes look horrible. I've seen Mother's eyes—" she clenched her fist—"I don't know what's the matter with her eyes. It's all gotten worse since I told them I was going to marry you. Joe's gone mad." She put her hands to her cheeks and stared across the room. "We talk to each other, we laugh; but it's all empty. God, it's empty!"

John stood at a corner of the rug, flipping the rug with the toe of his polished shoe, staring down at the shoe.

"You made me think," Caroline resumed in a quieter voice, "that I could find some sort of fullness for my life. I thought the emptiness at home was my fault. I thought it was because I had never lived—never had any kind of sex life at all. Sex hell!" Her voice coarsened. "Sex has made it emptier than ever. Yes, I mean what I say. I have less than I ever had before. That ghost—whatever it is—walks up and down—up and down all the time—and sits at the table with us; and none of us ever looks at the other but that we turn and look at It afterward." She drew herself up straight and stared at him. "You know what that ghost is! You *know*, John! If you don't tell me I'll——"

"Well?" He looked up calmly.

"I'll not marry you," she said.

"My dear girl," he said, approaching her, "if

you care for Joe more than you care for me, you must obviously not marry me."

This was the right thing to say. Caroline looked angry. "You know that isn't so, John."

"Very well. The situation which you describe in such gruesome terms is the most natural one in the world. Joe never wanted Diana to marry your father, and Joe's the kind who'll hold a grudge for years. I won't say he hates his mother, but it's the next thing to it. He certainly does hate your father, and therefore he hates me. When he learned about you and me, all these feelings were stirred up, and besides he was jealous. Because there's no doubt in my mind that Joe cares for you——"

"Do you—think he does?"

"In his own way, certainly he does." Delaney gathered momentum. "I don't know that you could call it love, because I doubt if the man is capable of love, as you and I know it. I'm quite sure, however, that he's jealous of you in regard to me. You've always been a great deal kinder to him than was necessary, I think. That's like you, Caroline. You let him scold and criticize you, and make fun of you; but naturally he resents having his goat taken away. He's a very vindictive sort of person. No wonder you see ghosts, with him glooming around the way he does." Delaney smiled. "Don't you see? You're such a goose, my dear," he said, standing closer to her and putting his hands on her shoulders. "I suppose women are always suspicious of men," he said, looking into her eyes for the moment that she raised them to him. "I've offered quite frankly to tell

you everything about my past. I would be glad to tell you. I think, if you feel you must know, then you ought to know. But as for anything between Joe and me, I can't tell you that, because there's been nothing like that. There has never, never been a woman between us."

Caroline took a deep breath and looked down at her feet.

"Do you believe me now?" John asked.

"No," she said with a quiet smile.

He studied the glossy brown hair of her bowed head. "What would make you believe me?"

"Something a little less logical," she said, looking up at him alertly.

"Life is logical."

"No," she said, "only lies are logical."

"A nice *réplique*," he said with a smile. "But how about this threat?"

"What threat?"

"Are you going to marry me?"

She regarded him steadily. "That depends on how soon I discover that you've lied to me."

He dropped his eyes. "How silly."

"Silly—yes. But at least not logical," she said

John felt that she was no longer a mere girl.

That same evening Mr. Jencks twirled the knob of his private safe with a certain feeling of reverence for the combination that he was fastening for the night. Behind the esoteric numbers lay the dream and the conclusion of dream—the details of People's Boulevard—fame—philanthropy. And as if that were

not enough to make this safe a kind of ark, to be approached by no one but the high priest, be it recorded that Willard Jencks, as the inheritor of the Herd Realty Company, had taken over Grandfather's office, and that this was that very safe wherein Grandfather's generous will had been discovered. Yes, in Mr. Jencks's life this safe was sacred, to be laid into that museum of the heart, where the important objects of a lifetime—chairs in which books have been read, sofas upon which proposals have been made, certain fireplaces, certain mugs, spoons, cups, automobiles—are stored away, apparently forever. Mr. Jencks was like a Levite performing his Mosaic rite upon the plains of Judæa.

And yet, unfortunately, the crusade for better housing conditions and less traffic congestion was not proceeding as smoothly as he could have wished. Almost all the property was purchased or held on contract, and still the city refused its promise to buy the boulevard from the People's Corporation. The city insisted on publicity—it must be made an issue in the campaign; but that was ridiculous, because secrecy was essential to the one hundred per cent. acquisition of the property. Should the plan be announced, those few parcels of land which were not yet bought would be held for unreasonable prices. There could be no publicity without entire ownership; and on the other hand, Mr. Jencks could not purchase another lot without some payment from the city. He had already purchased too much. He had borrowed a million dollars with the Herd estate

as security; no doubt he could borrow more; but obviously he could not borrow enough to improve the boulevard property himself, obtain legislation, lay sewers, erect tenements, and literally make a street. He did not have enough capital to do that. The further he advanced into this vast dream, the more important the city's attitude became.

Since Grandfather's death he had sensed that the city was less respectful of the Herd Realty Company and of its manager. He was surrounded, not only by politics and graft, but by suspicion, as if City Hall did not believe a word he said about humanity and housing. He felt most keenly the opposition of Jeff Harmon, the wholesale grocer, who had come out definitely against the Herd philanthropies. Mr. Jencks could not understand this. How could anyone reasonably object to a scheme whereby three hundred thousand souls would find shelter, at moderate cost, and without permanently disturbing any public improvement? How could Harmon pretend to serve the people by opposing such a plan? Mr. Jencks was now depending on Oscar Mayes, and he had begun to suspect that Mayes was working for a personal profit somewhere. But who would pay Mayes to oppose People's Boulevard? Who could make money out of the failure of this dream? It was too obscure for Willard Jencks. He took a deep breath, as soon as he had closed the safe. He sighed with his responsibility, feeling himself to be the hub of the titanic wheel of progress—wheel of the cosmic chariot; feeling that if he could not hold together,

the rim and all the spokes would fly apart, the chariot collapse. It is the essence of prophecy, to know that fate rides upon one's soul, that the wheel of one's strength will carry the Charioteer in whatever direction he chooses to go. Latent in all leadership there is this conviction: in the activities of men like Brutus, or Cromwell, or Woodrow Wilson. Momentarily, after the safe was closed, Mr. Jencks felt himself to be one of them; that, if he could not dominate his emergency, the housing situation in the City of New York would fly to pieces.

Although the boulevard had originated in peaceful thoughts, for permanent and slow development, it had lately been shot through with this atmosphere of emergency. To keep it afloat involved a loss of five hundred thousand dollars a year. Recently, also, the two-year second mortgages he had secured, shortly after beginning his operations, were falling due, and he was finding it difficult to renew these. He had to pay them with cash, which was not plentiful at the moment. He had therefore undertaken a little speculation on the stock market, both for his own account and for People's Development. He had advance information about the merger between the Keystone and Bethlehem railroads; the rise of these stocks was a certainty, and a profit of a ten or fifteen points would help pay for the city's delay. This venture, however, had been converted into an emergency last January by the sudden gyrations of Bethlehem and the sympathetic ones of Keystone. Never, I think, will Mr. Jencks forget that morning when he opened the *Express* and read:

BETHLEHEM-KEYSTONE MERGER IS BLOCKED

Rumored Formation Of Giant System Denied On "The Street"

QUICK MANEUVER SEEN

Magnates Admit Secret Discussion But Withhold Details—Minority Meets—I.C.C. May Be Involved

That the rumored merger between Bethlehem and Keystone railroads will be blocked by a powerful minority in Bethlehem with a carefully planned campaign was learned last night from anonymous sources that cannot yet be revealed. This opposition, it is said, will take the form of a maneuver by the Bethlehem minority to force some of the largest stockholders of the two roads to dump their holdings on the open market.

The minority in question is composed of stockholders bitterly opposed to the deal, who have been in secret discussion for months, it is averred. While their committee refuses to make public its objections to the merging of interests, it is understood that the fight will revolve around the mid-Pennsylvania coal properties owned by Bethlehem.

These properties, many of which have been inactive for years, are said to have been underestimated by the Keystone stockholders in their offer to merge with Bethlehem on a two-for-one basis. It was on ac-

count of these that Bethlehem contested the I.C.C. rate-making valuation last year.

For this reason it is supposed that the opposition of the minority may also involve the Interstate Commerce Commission in the dispute, to such an extent as to delay the proposed merger almost indefinitely. While nothing positive can be learned on this subject, it is presumed that Washington is supporting the hostile Bethlehem committee. With this possibility in mind, it is averred that many big traders who were holding Bethlehem for one hundred a month ago, have unloaded stock on an over-optimistic public.

Although the merger between the two roads has never been officially announced, the rumor of it has been so long current, and has been so often revived, that it has come to be taken by many investors for a fact. This alone can explain the phenomenal rise that Keystone and Bethlehem have had in a period of violent price leveling. . . . Etc.

. . . "The *Morning Express* is usually right"—that was the slogan on the newspaper's title page; and it had been picked up by the Street, ironically at first, but then accepted as the kind of thing to respect, beneath laughter, like the popular belief in beginners' luck. The *Express* was a financial sheet which had grown out of an old newspaper; its articles were editorial, spectacular, and prejudiced; and yet thousands of traders had learned to sacrifice reason and logic to those prejudices. In figures of seven columns the *Express* had made its reputation, and it was said that no one ever acted contrary to its advice, for any considerable time, successfully.

This obstreperous sheet had once been under the influence of Filmore, the bear trader; it had then

passed to Lewis Fairchild, who developed Filmore's essential idea during the violent bull markets, when any reasonable tip was good for a ten-point rise. About a year ago, however, the *Express* had changed policy; it went bearish, and its predictions took on an alarming accuracy, of which the best financial interests disapproved, but which the small trader dared not disregard. Secretly, Fairchild had sold the paper to Madison van Duyn, who used it to create followings for his moves, through the medium of an editor named Cohen. Jed Cohen had been with the paper for twenty years, weighed two hundred pounds, and was not afraid. A move announced one morning would be actually started by Van Duyn at ten o'clock. A few days later Van Duyn would close out, the *Express* would announce the end of the move, and Cohen would be a more awesome figure than before. The fallacy of these predictions, of course, was that they gave the public no time to act; but however futile, no one could deny that they were correct, or that the stock had moved in the manner forecast.

The case of Bethlehem became typical. Schuyler Train, floor member of a firm in which Van Duyn was a silent partner, placed an order with the Bethlehem specialist to sell ten thousand shares. Bethlehem was at that time quoted about ninety, and plenty of days had recorded less than ten thousand shares of this stock altogether. The directors of Keystone and Bethlehem, and their friends, who were the only steadfast buyers of Bethlehem, hesitated momentarily, conferred, and opened communication

with Washington. Was this true about the I.C.C.? Impossible to tell for nearly an hour. Van Duyn had counted on this. In view of Jed Cohen's article, small traders did not want anything like ten thousand shares of Bethlehem. The specialist stared a moment, shook his head, and opened the stock at seventy-nine, down eleven points. Just below this price there were a number of stop-loss orders. Guessing this fact, Train offered three blocks of a thousand shares each. His move was backed by selling orders which began to pour in from customers' rooms. The price of Bethlehem melted. There had been such spectacular declines during the past year that few traders were willing to hold a stock through a crisis. It was the accounts of such men that Van Duyn was trying to clear away for Claypoole. Here was Bethlehem, now, being offered by excited brokers knotted around the specialist, with whom Claypoole had placed scaled orders to buy. The crowd at the post swelled, like a sudden octopus, reaching out its wavering arms to the telephones along the walls. All this while the floor member for Gale and Townsend was picking up stock for Claypoole as he could find it, and at sixty-four he stopped the decline by demanding ten thousand shares. The stock rose three points, and Train immediately set out to cover what he could of Van Duyn's short sales. By this time the insiders had their reassurance from Washington and came into the market with large buying orders. The squall ended with Claypoole thirty thousand shares to the good and Van Duyn short fifteen: the irony of the situation being that the stock to be loaned to

Van Duyn for his deliveries would come from supplies that the bulls in Bethlehem had accumulated for the rise.

By the close of that day Bethlehem had returned to eighty-four. The next morning the *Express* appeared with a second article, admitting that it had been mistaken about the I.C.C., but reaffirming its prediction that the Keystone merger was off. The trouble would come from Bethlehem, it said. Throughout January and February these articles continued to predict disaster for the bulls in Bethlehem, and thus successfully prevented Packer, Ellis, and Jencks from creating a public in the stock. Van Duyn covered five thousand of his short account, and Claypoole was within a few thousand of his control. But of all this, Willard Jencks knew nothing. . . .

He sighed, having closed his safe. A sense of brittleness had become habitual, a sense of atomic strain, as if he were an I-beam strained to its breaking point. He did not like the market and when the next chance came he would sell out. It had been unreasonable to hope for a rise in the midst of this bear organization. If he was secretly ashamed of his financial conduct, at least it was fair to blame it on City Hall, which had kept the boulevard, ponderous locomotive, unthrottled down the graded mountains of finance. He took his hat from the closet and struggled into his spring coat. Miss Cole entered to announce that his limousine was at the door. The news relaxed him, as if the strain on the I-beam had suddenly been removed. Home was good. Every evening, at the end of the frictioned day, there was

this smooth sleep in which the sense of speed was lost. He wanted a cocktail. Why was it that, at this time of trouble, his stomach ulcer should become active again? He set his lips together firmly and walked down the hall, under the Babylonian frieze.

Mr. Jencks had been introduced to the Bethlehem Railroad by Allan Keynton, a Keystone director with whom he was negotiating for a right of way through Keystone property on the West Side. In exchange for some stock in Western Gate—the boulevard corporation covering that territory—Keynton gave him the merger tip. He bought Keystone and Bethlehem in moderate blocks as legitimate quick assets for P.D.Q., and he bought a little of each for himself. It was not until after Grandfather's death, when he was temporarily deprived of the Herd resources which Grandfather had always allowed him to manipulate, that Mr. Jencks lost his head and stepped into Bethlehem for his own account to the tune of four million dollars, with which he held one hundred thousand shares at about eighty-six. When the stock reached ninety he had a fair profit, but you can imagine his agitation when he read that article in the *Express* over his morning coffee. He called up Keynton in Philadelphia, but Keynton was bewildered and did not know what might have happened in Washington. Monroe, in New York, was less shaken; his office became the headquarters of the insiders. When the stock opened at seventy-nine Mr. Jencks had a paper loss of seven hundred thousand dollars. At the low point of sixty-four his loss was more than two million. He

dared not sell there. Word finally came through that the I.C.C. was not opposed, the *Express* was wrong. Mr. Jencks put more P.D.Q. into his brokerage accounts—he had little to spare now—and decided to hold Bethlehem until the stockholders' meeting in May. When the day closed he was only two hundred thousand dollars out; but he had lost four pounds.

Bethlehem had never reached its high again, but Mr. Jencks's worst troubles now were to be found in P.D.Q. Mr. Phelps had begun to talk of selling the stock, of which the estate owned one hundred and ten thousand shares. With due respect for Mr. Jencks's financial ability, Mr. Phelps did not think People's Development very sound. The old Fifty-seventh Street properties had been better than the present West Side ones, he thought. Why had Willard changed? The heirs in Worcester had to be protected, you see. Mr. Jencks had argued forcefully to the opposite effect. It would certainly not be a wise execution of the will to sell a hundred thousand P.D.Q. at this time, when Mr. Jencks himself was unable to sustain the market. Besides, the hundred and ten thousand shares belonging to the Herd Realty were a necessary part of the valuable control of P.D.Q. that Mr. Jencks possessed. Thus he held back the deluge; and was now considering some way of involving Mr. Phelps in the destiny of the boulevard, as, like a spider, he had involved the directors of National Garden Foods, Keystone Railroad, Slim-Fit Frocks, and the managers of the Pinkham, North, and Stenton estates.

His limousine was halted by red lights at Sixteenth

Street, and this reminded him of the old house to the east, on Gramercy Park; he remembered Grandfather there; he remembered his younger self energetically selling itself to Grandfather; optimistic, keen to earn a throne among the real-estate gods; and how Frank had taken Diana there to live for a few months after they were married, and how Diana had hated the house because it was dark and old. Nevertheless, it was there that his younger self had first seen Diana, and no doubt had fallen in love with her, without admitting it. In those days she had been like a torch. Now she was lovely still, but since she was in his power she irritated him; although this could not blot his pride in possessing the woman upon whom Frank Herd had expended so much of his shiftless charm. Frank had been a glamorous figure, in the eyes of Willard's younger self, possessed of all the virtues that it did not have, and all the vices too. Frank's death had been like his life, unreasonable and spectacular, an affair for newspapers and novelists. On the subject of Diana, Frank had gone mad, like lovers in old legends and Shakespearean plays. As soon as this emergency subsided, and the boulevard was cut through the city, he would read a play or two of Shakespeare's, and try to appreciate it; for surely there is nothing more deplorable than an uncultured leader. Suddenly he felt alone—he would have to read Shakespeare alone—for he had outlasted his preceptors: Grandfather in business, Frank Herd in society. They had taught him everything he knew. He needed Frank, not for the details of the business, but for the breeziness

with which the Colonel had inspired everything he touched. People's Boulevard needed a breeze. To be sure, Delaney had the same gift as Frank, but John was too aggressive, too unscrupulous perhaps. In that Intercity Aviation scheme, which was now fortunately closed, John was at least over-anxious to declare that Grandfather had known about Intercity. Mr. Jencks had had to raise a million and a half out of his private funds to purchase that property from Intercity and thus clear the books, borrowing this amount from three banks on sixty thousand shares of P.D.Q. for collateral. Having purchased the property, he had placed mortgages on it for eight hundred thousand, and had thus reduced his bank loans; but the interest on these mortgages amounted to more than fifty thousand dollars a year. And the life of that accountant, Herman Niehlson, was all tied up in this. Mr. Jencks had spent some time on that problem just this afternoon, with Niehlson's lawyer. It really was not a thing you could be so positive about as John pretended to be. He found himself shocked by Delaney's effort to save the boulevard at the possible expense of Niehlson's life. This sort of thing required time; one had to grope back into one's memory cautiously. The boulevard was a vast ideal, yet it must not be executed with the guillotine, the way democracy was born from France. No. You could not accuse innocent men of murder for all the housing improvements in the world. Grandfather might not have been told about Intercity; and so long as Joe and Niehlson's lawyer believed this to be a material factor in Niehl-

son's defense, Mr. Jencks would not lie about it. He had always been careful to conduct business honorably, because, in the long run, it paid. Make people trust you! The concealment of Intercity had been a terrible mistake, and no doubt John was inclined toward that sort of business—there had been some evidence of it before; and for this reason Willard was not as enthusiastic about Caroline's proposed marriage to John as he pretended to be. He had never quite made up his mind, although, because Caroline expected him to be pleased, he had acted as if he were pleased. Perhaps he judged men too harshly; perhaps his own code of honor was too high; perhaps Delaney was merely a little more human than Willard Jencks. No doubt he should protect John against himself, which was his natural duty as a father-in-law; he should expect to teach others, now that he was past fifty years. No doubt, also, Caroline could have chosen less felicitously, could have chosen some worthless young fellow with no brains—one of that Long Island crowd; or could have chosen Joe, since it had always been the family joke that she would do so. There were, indeed, advantages to this marriage which, in fairness to Caroline, he must not overlook. The money would remain in the family, as it were. Diana had been the first one to adopt John Delaney, long ago. She was shrewd, she could read character. She was unreasonably cold toward him now, which was one of the things that irritated Willard. You cannot explain women's attitudes. There must have been some petty misunderstanding be-

tween them. And was it not very fine of Diana, in view of the Herd will, not to try to marry Caroline to Joe? It was generous of her to see her son's limitations so impartially; for Joe was not Caroline's equal. (Strange, was it not, that a man like himself, with such conservative ideas about marriage, should have married two such women as Sophia and Diana? No doubt his exterior attracted women in spite of themselves. No doubt women secretly prefer reliable men, no matter what lovers they may play.) And therefore—winding down the ramp, out from the New York Central Building—he must set aside a certain sum of Grandfather's money for Joe, as soon as the boulevard went through. At present, to speak honestly, he could not afford it; but in a few years he would give Joe one or two hundred thousand, because Grandfather had been too severe in his disappointment. But as to this Niehlson problem, it was extremely delicate, because the admission that Grandfather had been ignorant of Intercity opened the way to Niehlson's contention that Grandfather had died of shock; and if this were established, certainly it implied that Grandfather's managers had not been over-scrupulous; and finally, if such a rumor got around at this time, with P.D.Q. in its weakened condition, there might just possibly be a stampede in the stock, driving it down to levels that would ruin him. Normally, of course, a concern like People's Development could stand a little talk like that; but not now. There must be some better way of saving Niehlson than this. . . .

The limousine drew up before his own elegant door.

About an hour ago Joe Herd had let himself into this house of cross-purposes, realizing as he applied the key to the lock that he would not be returning here much longer. He knew the limits of deception, and that he himself, in the next difficult moment, would break through the mask behind which he was living. For he had been working for three months with enormous pressure and endurance. It was a repetition of his football manner of listlessness punctuated by violent periods of carrying the ball. There was no Aristotelian mean for this character, whose energy was either torpid or demonic. In effect, he had organized a wrecking company whose sole purpose was the destruction of Willard Jencks. This organization had four branches, the most important of which was the locating and purchasing of mortgages on Jencks's properties through small real-estate dealers, private investors, title companies, and mortgage firms on the West Side. Joe took every available lien on the boulevard territory, and especially those second mortgages by which Jencks had paid for part of his properties, which were held for the most part by private individuals, and which were expiring every week. It was Joe, working through dummies, who had bought most of the eight hundred thousand dollars' worth of mortgages by which Mr. Jencks had reduced his bank loans in that Intercity deal. He had spread such rumors through the district

that no one but his wrecking firm wanted Jencks's mortgages. He had even been fortunate enough to obtain title to a small property on West Forty-second Street, immediately in the path of the boulevard.

The second branch of his organization was political. It had enlisted the I.R.T. and had formed an association of West Side property owners, involving a few large interests which could keep the secret. Thus reinforced, Joe laid before the city the actual costs of the properties that Jencks had bought. He contended that Jencks should not be allowed to develop the boulevard privately (in case Uncle Will had any idea of attempting this); and he pointed out that the price of eighty million dollars, which P.D.Q. was asking for the land already purchased, was at least twenty-five million dollars too high. Under the surface of the West Side he educated the political captains in the idea of these municipally erected tenements, with a new street running between them and the facilities of the new Eighth Avenue subway just beyond their doors. That is how he brought such great pressure on men like Jeff Harmon, the Traffic Committee, the Board of Plan and Survey, and other godfathers of the city, who were beginning to see valuable political material in Joe's version of People's Boulevard, which might in the end be more profitable to them than the jobbery of Willard Jencks. Where Jencks stood for secrecy and private profit, Joe offered the boulevard as an issue in the next campaign, and the transfer to the city of all the accumulated property at cost. The shrewd-

est of the godfathers began to see that the way to effect this change was simply to refuse Mr. Jencks, until P.D.Q. dropped so low that young Herd could buy up a control.

A third department of the wrecking firm devoted itself to the stock market, which had become jumpy and was apt to cave in unexpectedly where particular issues were proved to be unsound. The psychology of a bear market is that investors discount the bad news and disregard the good; and since people had now reached this frame of mind, Van Duyn and Joe thought they could cause wide declines in P.D.Q. and Bethlehem Railroad if they could manufacture sufficient bad news. If P.D.Q. could be stranded with twenty million dollars tied up in properties on which it was losing two and a half per cent. per annum, the news might be bad enough; but if this could be subtly combined with the Niehlson trial, which was now set for the latter part of April, perhaps P.D.Q. could be picked up at an extraordinarily cheap price. Consequently, a fourth department of Joe's business was concerned with criminal law, in ascertaining exactly what evidence Niehlson could use for his defense, and how far it could be implied, in the course of a murder trial, that the books of People's Development, through the Herd Finance, had been watered by its own managers.

For a lazy soul, you will admit that all this was a large consignment of work. Joe was at his shabby office on West Forty-second Street before eight o'clock every morning. He was, of course, operating

behind dummies, just as Jencks operated behind the welfare corporations of the boulevard. Joe was the captain of a great mushroom. His motive was not very clear, even to himself. Sometimes he would stop his activity to wonder why he was in the midst of it, and at such times he saw clearly that, while Caroline had caused the first shot, she could not justify the whole war. There was some sense of fate within him, a force of the subconscious, which Van Duyn understood, but which Joe would never be able to bring to words: as if his father had returned, like the elder Hamlet; as if he himself had come to the earth as a cosmic executioner, to put Willard Jencks to the rack. Like the American revolutionists, his first efforts had been little more than protests, with the theory behind them of challenging John Delaney, the tyrant of his childhood; and now suddenly there had been born out of the chaos of hate and ambition, an individual, a vista of an empire in his mind.

He had continued to live at Uncle Will's in order to attend the dinners that Jencks was giving to those he wished to interest in the boulevard. Besides the directors of Keystone and the directors of Bethlehem (most of whom came from out of town), there had been many guests who did not properly belong to the Jenckses' entourage, and whose wives had been socially gratified by these invitations. Their daughters also, and sometimes their sons, passed cloaks to the maid, scarves and hats to the footman, and were received in the formal Louis XV drawing room by the ample Jencks, who had, however, grown thinner

since his inheritance; by the brittle Diana; by Delaney, who was conversationally warm, and by Caroline, skeptically cool. The former heir of the house would be present, looking too short, even somewhat squat in his long-tailed coat; but it cannot be said that he received anyone. He was simply present. He added nothing, and no one suspected that he was going to take anything away. No one had any idea of why he was there. After dinner he would sit among the men in the dining room, his eyes on the liqueur glass that he spun with chubby fingers, a cigar in the corner of his mouth, his light-brown hair slicked back, his face expressionless, his green eyes masked. There was something in the curve of his forehead that reminded you of a muskrat, and something in his cheeks that looked like a bulldog. There he was. Behind the dull mask was motion which Harry Gale had focused three months ago. He would listen to the talk of the Bethlehem raid, or of the difficulty of renewing mortgages between Forty-seventh and Fiftieth streets; glancing now like a sober child at Jencks, now with a slight squint of his eyes at Delaney. Sometimes he would interrupt the conversation with a sudden penetrating question, and this would always startle Mr. Jencks, who would stare at Joseph Herd's grandson with his mouth a little open before replying; so that for a few seconds these two seemed to be without masks, their souls stripped of the dummy corporations with which they had surrounded themselves like crabs; as if, indeed, for a few seconds, Mr. Jencks perceived the presence of Judas among the disciples;

bu. then he would answer the question, and then Joe uld have an idea to execute the next morning.

This evening he was tired, and he had reached a critical point in these affairs beyond which it seemed futile to proceed. For the first time, since threatening to stop Caroline's marriage, he saw himself objectively, and saw that he had lost the stoic balance that was the only fruit of his childhood. He had joined the fools; he entertained illusions; he had a motive which seemed, in his present mood, no more valid than the ambition of Willard Jencks. As he climbed the stairs listlessly he was on the point of reverting to his own type, as if the flame of desire had been extinguished, to leave the surfaces of self ashen and waste, as they had always been since his father's death. Moments like this punctuate all effort, and it is perhaps only chance which decides whether the stop shall be a comma, or semicolon, or period. But Joe's attack on Jencks may be said to have reached the nadir of its energy just as he set foot on the last step on the second floor: because, passing the opened door of Caroline's room, he became conscious of the odor of her things; and looking into the room as he passed was like looking at Caroline herself, although she was not there. The fragrance of this roused him. He realized that he had not seen her alone for three months, not only because he left the house so early in the morning, but also because Caroline never returned in the evening until just before dinner, in time to dress. Where did she keep herself all afternoon? He was surprised by his

own curiosity; he was really very eager to know what Caroline was in the habit of doing. It would be against his rules of practice to ask her, yet he decided to find out. Perhaps she spent the afternoons with Delaney. If so, where? The possibilities of this were disquieting. She would not marry Delaney. He had that to say, on the subject of Caroline; he was positive and forceful again.

And a few minutes later, in his hot bath, groping lazily for the soap that had gotten lost somewhere, he was trying to explain Caroline's attitude toward him. She seemed neither angry nor insulted; it was almost as if he had passed out a few casual remarks on the subject of Delaney and had let it go at that. Whereas, good God, his whole life was in this! He had never wanted anything before, but now he wanted this so much that he was ready to destroy the work of his grandfather's life—that sweaty work—and the shifty work of Jencks's life; and Delaney's life, and his mother's life, and what Caroline considered her happiness. He was putting the skids under all of that, and yet Caroline treated him like a spoiled younger brother, and said flippant things, and dry caustic things, as if she did not care how many people were ruined by this decision of hers, more or less. Joe grunted, feeling the soap just beyond his fingers. You could not suppose that she had failed to understand the intensity of his purpose, the unalterability of it. She understood that well enough. She was playing some damned game with him. She was a damned woman. . . .

He had just stepped from the bathroom in a green

Sulka dressing gown, and had walked toward the cocktail shaker, when someone knocked on his door.

"Can I come in, Joe?"

He looked up. "Sure, Mother. Come in."

Diana opened the door for herself. Her lips were parted and her gray eyes sought his at once. He sensed that she had been crying, although she showed no traces of it. Joe shoved a chair at her. "Sit down," he said with a grin, "and have a cocktail."

She was dressed in a pale yellow tea gown with wide lacy sleeves. She hitched one shoulder with a little shiver. "Yes," she said, "I'd love one."

Joe got a tumbler from the bathroom. With a kind of deliberate motion he poured a drink for Diana into the cocktail glass, bowing over it. His fingers around the frosted shaker were short and blunt. His fine brown hair was cropped just close enough to be neat, and he had brushed it in the bathroom. The green dressing gown was regal.

"What did you do all day?" his mother asked.

"Nothin' much." He was bowing over the second glass.

"I haven't got a minute," Diana said, "because there's just time to dress. But I never see you any more, dear. You leave the house so early."

"Yeah," he said. "I do go out early sometimes." He gave her the pale yellow Martini, that matched her tea gown, and turned back to the table for his own. He noted that she was nervous. He raised his glass. "Well," he said, "here's how."

But Diana did not drink. She was absorbed in

some thought, and while he tossed off his Martini she sat staring at the cocktail shaker. Joe set his glass down with a sigh, picked up the shaker, rattled it, and poured another drink.

"Joe dear," Diana said, "I came to see you about something very important."

"Yeah? Shoot."

"It's about Caroline," she said.

Joe set down his shaker. With his back to her he crossed toward a chair, holding his drink. "What's happened to Caroline?"

"Nothing has—happened. You see, Joe, Caroline expects to marry John in June, and last week she told me she wanted the engagement announced right away."

Joe was about to sit down, but checked himself and turned around.

It was difficult for Diana to proceed up the current of his stare. "But first—Joe—after what you said the first time"—she cleared her throat—"I want to know what your—attitude——"

She could not say any more.

"My attitude," Joe said, "is just what it was first I heard 'bout it." He raised this second drink, swallowed it, crossed to the table, and set the tumbler down with a bang.

"What do you mean—by that, Joe?"

He faced her. "She isn't goin' t' marry Delaney," he said, "so I don't see much use in announcin' th' engagement."

"But she says she is going to marry him."

He shook his head slowly.

Diana's next question was the one that was frightening her. "But—how are you going to stop her?"

"How d'you s'pose?"

"I haven't any idea, dear."

"For one thing," Joe said, "I'm goin' to tell her who some of Delaney's mistresses 've been."

"Joe." Her voice was higher at the beginning of the monosyllable than at the end of it, like the calm tone that one uses to make a child think. "Listen to me now," she said. "For fifteen years you have been holding this over me and you have been utterly relentless and utterly unforgiving. I have borne your intolerance with just as much patience as I could. I have considered it God's punishment for my—what I did. But Joe, you don't know how you've punished me. My whole life has been ruined just because—something happened—when you were too little to understand it. I have had to pay, and pay, and pay! I can't pay any more for *that.* It wasn't worth it, Joe. I tell you it wasn't worth any more punishment! I thought—if I married Will—I could make it up to your father. I thought it was my duty to marry Will, for your sake, Joe. But you stand in my way always—staring. I wonder sometimes why I haven't gone mad," she sobbed. "You're like rocks, Joe, rolling down—slowly——"

He stood silent a moment because she was crying. Presently he said in a cold voice, "What's all this got to do with Caroline?"

"Nothing," she said, looking up at him with tears on her cheeks, "except I suppose you intend to tell—Caroline."

"Not only Caroline," Joe said with a jerk of his knee, "but Uncle Will."

"No! No, no!" She jumped from her chair. "You don't know what you're doing, you young fool! You can't go on destroying people's lives like this! It's not only my life. It's Willard's life and Caroline's life. To say nothing of John's—as if he should pay forever and ever for making love to me—once—when I was mad—when I was young," she cried. She raised her fists. "You can't make people pay like that, Joe! You don't realize what a family is—life—you don't realize how much hell there is in twenty years!"

She had put her hand to her forehead, and she now passed it back over her fine, bobbed hair. The lines of her face were drawn as she stared at him. How could you enter such impenetrable eyes as Joe's?

"I'm about as well acquainted with hell as you are," he said. "The only diff'rence is that my hell b'gan when I was too young t' know what it was. So I'm used to it."

"You've brought it on yourself, then! Willard and I have done everything we could think of——"

"Never mind me," he interrupted. "You don't know anythin' 'bout me. The point is I'm offerin' you a fair way out of this."

"To oppose Caroline's marriage!"

"Not only oppose it, stop it."

"How can *I* stop it? Her father wants it."

"The more fool he."

"That's hardly for you to say. You're too young, I suppose, to appreciate facts like these."

"Facts like what?"

"When people reach a certain age they're willing to forget the past——"

"You tryin' t' tell me that Uncle Will's willin' to forget what he's never known?"

"No, Joe. But John and I want to forget——"

"Oh yeah."

"And Willard sees that, after all, this is the very best thing for Caroline. And I tell you, Joe, if you force me to resist this—can't you see?—John would never understand *why* I was resisting it—can't you see? He'd think me jealous of Caroline!" Her fists were clenched again.

Joe spoke calmly. "If you wanted t' stop this, you could stop it. When you wanted t' marry Uncle Will, 'spite of Grandfather and me, I noticed you did it. When you wanted a new house you got it. When you wanted a lover you——"

"Do you realize you're talking to your mother!"

"Unfortunately."

"Oh dear God!" She flung away from him. "I don't know what to do with you. I honestly—honestly, I hope you're insane!" She turned back. "You treat me like a chippy!"

"You've got off the point again," he said.

"Joe, he'll make her a good husband. Can't you see that? The past is past. You can't punish the past. Even God doesn't punish the past. She *loves* him, Joe. Can't you see that? She loves, *loves*. Christ, I can't talk to you! You don't know what words mean. How should you know what I mean by love——"

"Yeah. How should I?"

Diana paled.

"I heard you speak diff'rently 'bout him once," he said. "You said, 'My God, Frank, it has nothin' t' do with love.'"

Diana became tense.

"'N neither has this," Joe said.

All this time the muscles of Diana's face were under strain. Although she normally looked no more than thirty, her face now lengthened, adding fifteen years to her apparent age. Because of this tautness Joe could read every thought on her face, whose smoothness usually dimmed her thoughts. He could see successive ideas dawning in her eyes and spreading across her strained forehead and her mouth. Before she spoke he could see what she was going to say.

She spoke deliberately. "I never said it," she said.

"I remember it."

"You think you do! You're elaborating a story about me to nurse your own grievances. You just try to make anyone believe it!" She laughed harshly. "You idiot!"

"For God's sake!" Joe cried. "Don't tell me this never happened. Don't tell me I didn't see Delaney——"

"Of *course* you did! And then you blabbed what you saw to your father. And then your father assumed what he had no right to assume, and what you've never had any right to assume! Certainly John was in the house! Why shouldn't he be? There's nothing wrong in that."

"Why did he sneak out the back door like that?"

"Because—naturally——" Diana raised her shoulders. "You don't know what your father was like, Joe. He was a demon. John and I didn't—we weren't wrong—not in *any* way—but you might as well have talked to a stone wall as to tell your father that. And it would have been all right except that you—blabbing—not knowing what you were doing—wrecked our lives—Frank's and John's and mine! And have never offered me any atonement, any apology of any kind. You've never so much as tried to make up for that crime of yours—it was a crime!—when you were too young to know what you were doing!"

"Hunh. Have you ever heard of th' statute of limitations?"

"Now what are you talking about?"

"Because," Joe continued, "you've had ten or a dozen years to tell me this."

"You've been too young."

"Oh, I see. I'm of age now, am I?" He leaned toward her deliberately. "Well that's just th' point I'm tryin' t' make. I'm of age now and what I say goes. And I say Caroline isn't goin' t' marry that crook. And I say that if you 'llow any step to be taken in that direction I'll tell Caroline and Uncle Will that I saw him sneakin' out th' back door of my father's house when you were 'lone in it; and that you admitted to Dad that he'd been with you, and haven't ever denied it to me for a dozen years. If they don't b'lieve me I got nothin' t' lose."

They stared at each other a moment, balancing: Joe with his neck thrust forward and his jaws locked;

Diana with her hands on her cheeks, the tips of her fingers at her ears, her mouth open. She seemed to have lost control of her mind. "It's a lie!" she whispered suddenly. "I never did it!" She threw back her head with hysterical laughter. "You're making it up. You're insane. Ha—ha—ha! Try to make them believe it. Try it! They'll throw you out of the house!" She turned toward the door, crossed to it, and flung it open. For a moment she stood in the doorway staring at him. "They'll turn you out," she cried. "You abominable son!"

Then he heard her descend the stairs to her own room, sobbing and laughing.

Joe went down to dinner a few minutes early. He heard Caroline at the piano in the sitting room, and found her there alone.

"Hello Handsome," she said, striking three curt chords and then sitting back with her hands on her lap.

"Hi Cutie."

"You look prosperous."

"Where's John?"

"How should I know?" She had left John to dress at their apartment half an hour before.

"Hunh. That's a good one." He proceeded across the room. "Guess I could write a book on what you don't know about John."

"Are you still on that wave length?"

"Never 'spect t' get off it."

"That's a stimulating prospect for conversation." She ran off an arpeggio in D major and then re-

solved swiftly to G. But she was a mediocre musician. She wanted to defy him, and at the same time she wanted to draw his secret out of him. She could not decide which of these incompatibles she wanted most.

Mr. Jencks entered. "Well, well, at the piano again, eh? Mighty fine." He pulled the lobe of her ear playfully. "Does a man good to come home to music. Good-evening, Joe."

"Hunh." Joe nodded.

"Nobody for dinner to-night, Dad?" Caroline asked.

"No. Just the family to-night, I believe. And John, of course."

"That's nice," Caroline said.

"Where is John?" Mr. Jencks asked.

"I don't know. I suppose he's home."

"I just called him there but he wasn't there."

"I'm sure I don't know where he is," Caroline said, touching the notes of a waltz.

Joe smiled lugubriously.

"Well Joe, my boy," Mr. Jencks said, "what have you been doing all day?"

"Nothin' much."

"Nothing eh?" Mr. Jencks felt somewhat suspended in the air. "I suppose you've been playing bridge at the Phaëton?"

"No."

"Somebody was telling me the other day," Mr. Jencks said, "that you play a corking game. Now as for me, I don't enjoy bridge."

"Shouldn't think you would."

"Eh—no. No. It requires a special type of mentality, I believe." Mr. Jencks raised himself on his toes a moment. "Besides, I've always been so busy I haven't had much time for games. I'm a rotten golfer, you know."

"Yeah," Joe said.

"But still I love the game," Mr. Jencks said. "It's a beautiful game."

"Don't see any point in it."

"No. Well of course there isn't any unless you *make* a point. That's true of anything in life, I think. I think you could profitably consider that, Joseph."

"Yeah."

They were silent, standing side by side in front of the fireplace. Mr. Jencks raised himself on his toes again and let himself down.

"Eh by the way, Joseph. The case of your friend Niehlson will begin in a few weeks, I believe."

"Yeah."

"What do you think about it?"

"I think it's a bum case."

"You mean, that Niehlson will be acquitted?"

"Yeah."

"The man's attorney was in to see me to-day."

"I know he was."

"You know? How?"

"Well I just know. Anything wrong in that?"

"No no. Don't be so antagonistic. You always know everything, of course." Mr. Jencks cleared his throat.

"Has he served you yet?" Joe asked.

"Subpoena, you mean? Oh no!"

"Well he will."

Caroline stopped playing the piano and sat with her back to them, listening.

Mr. Jencks cleared his throat again. "I don't think so, Joseph. You aren't up on all the facts of the case, perhaps. Mr. Smedley—is that the name?—asked me what I thought about Niehlson. I replied, of course, that I knew nothing positive but that, so far as I knew, Niehlson had struck your grandfather. Mr. Smedley urged the fact that no weapon has been found, which is certainly a very fine point in Niehlson's favor. I hope he emphasizes that point. In court, I mean. I really don't know about this, you see. I remember you had some ideas."

"I got one idea."

"Yes, I suppose——"

"Niehlson would rather've jumped out of th' window than hit Grandfather with a fly swatter."

"Um. But how do you know that——"

"I know it."

"I see. But that's not very convincing, you see. Now Mr. Smedley seems to think that the case will revolve around your grandfather's knowledge, or ignorance, of the existence of a certain corporation we——"

"Intercity."

"Yes. I remember now, you had heard of it, hadn't you?"

"Hunh."

"Well, whether your grandfather knew that the Finance Corporation had invested in that stock, or not. If he did not know it, Mr. Smedley says, it will

be impossible to prove Niehlson's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt."

"Check."

Caroline swung the piano stool around and sat facing them.

"So Mr. Smedley asked me what I knew about this, and I replied, which was the truth, that I could not distinctly remember. In the normal course of events your grandfather would not necessarily have been consulted about such an investment. On the other hand, I may very well have spoken to him of it, and in fact I dimly remember having done so. So many things have happened since then that it is hard to tell. I told Mr. Smedley that, in any case, it would be impossible for me to testify, on my oath, that your grandfather was ignorant of Intercity. I said that, in my opinion, he probably knew about Intercity."

"Well, your opinion's wrong."

"Now see here, Joseph——"

"Now Dad!" Caroline said unexpectedly.

Her father stopped and stared at her.

"You're always saying that Joe doesn't know what he's talking about, but he's usually right anyway. I think he's probably right about this. I'm sure——"

Caroline herself was interrupted by a familiar chuckle behind her as John Delaney stepped into the room from the hall. "Is Joe right about something again?"

Joe cleared his throat angrily.

"Good-evening, John," Mr. Jencks said. He turned

to Caroline. "He may very likely be right," he said. "I'm by no means convinced that Niehlson is guilty. But I don't think Joseph has the right attitude toward me when he questions rudely everything I say and acts as if he knew more than anyone else. It's most exasperating," Mr. Jencks said.

"But if Joe knows that Niehlson's innocent," Caroline said, surprised to find herself siding with her stepbrother again, "he's certainly got a right to say so."

"How does he know it?" Delaney asked aggressively; and since no one answered, "Nobody else knows it."

"Niehlson knows it," Joe said, leaning against the mantel sluggishly.

"He told you, I suppose!"

"I watched him," Joe said.

"I suppose you were hiding in the closet during the whole scene."

"There isn't any closet," Joe said. "It's in the secretary's office."

No one could deny this. Mr. Jencks fidgeted with his tie. Delaney crossed to the table and took a cigarette out of a silver box. He tapped it on the back of his hand. He appeared to be brooding. Suddenly he threw the unlighted cigarette into the ash tray and turned on Joe.

"See here. If you don't mind my saying so, I'd like a little more courtesy from you. I'm pretty damned sick of your smart cracks, and I'm sick of seeing Willard stand for 'em too. You treat your uncle as if he were a coal heaver. He's lenient with you and you

can get away with it, but I'll have you know you can't get away with it with me. I don't let puppies snap at me."

"You're a big terrible dog, eh?" Joe had his head forward.

"I'm getting the goods on you, Joe Herd. I've had you trailed for a couple of weeks."

Joe's heart pounded. "Yeah?"

"Yes. What d'you do in that office on West Forty-second Street I'd like to know?"

"Maybe you'll find out one of these days."

Mr. Jencks was utterly surprised. He stared first at Delaney and then at Joe. Office on West Forty-second Street?

"That's right!" Delaney cried. "I'm going to find out. And if I find out what I think, you'll get yourself into prison, my dear young man."

"Yeah? What d'you think?"

"Maybe *you'll* find out one of these days," Delaney said tauntingly.

Caroline arose. "John."

He half turned to her, eyeing Joe at the same time. "That's all right, my dear," he said. "I've spoken a little hastily perhaps. I don't know what this man's up to but I've got a circumstantial report of his actions right here in my pocket."

"Actions?" Mr. Jencks said.

"Tell 'em what you're talkin' about," Joe said.

"Don't think you can pass this off by being hard-boiled, Herd," Delaney cried. "I'm going to have an explanation, and I'm going to get it by the law!" He advanced on Joe and his voice was loud.

"Easy, John," Mr. Jencks said. "Easy."

Caroline stared. Joe leaned against the mantel and grinned at Delaney maliciously.

"This fellow is a criminal," Delaney cried, facing Jencks a moment. "He's been working under cover ——"

"At least I'm not a crook," Joe said.

Delaney faced him again. "You're worse than a crook."

"You're just a plain crook."

Delaney's right arm went back, with its fist clenched. He bent his knees and shifted his weight forward for a blow at Joe's face.

Mr. Jencks jumped at his manager and seized his left arm. "John, John! Caroline is here——"

Caroline could not move. She held her hands to her cheeks and her lips were parted.

"What d'you care whether Caroline's here or not," Joe said to Delaney.

Before Mr. Jencks could stop him, John swung his right shoulder forward and his fist shot through a half circle to hook Joe in the jaw. Joe ducked and raised his forearm, but not in time. Delaney's fist hit him on the cheek. His head snapped back against a china vase, which fell from the mantel and split in fragments. He collapsed against the mantel. A rackful of fire tools clattered to the floor. Caroline screamed. Mr. Jencks threw his weight against Delaney and shoved him out of Joe's range. "Disgraceful, John—calm yourself—before Caroline." He grasped Delaney's arms.

"Let go of me Willard. I'm all right."

"Come away. Come away."

Joe had not fallen to the floor, and now steadied himself by the mantel. He was swaying. His cheek was battered and his mouth bleeding. He passed his hand groggily over his mouth. He seemed blinded. Caroline stared at him. It was several seconds before she could move, for the scene had been like a sudden explosion from the past, and was so timely to her thoughts that she was stunned. Mr. Jencks was now fussing over John and protesting in whispers. No one had rescued Joe. There was no more thought for Caroline. She ran across the room, and placing one hand on Joe's arm, the other on his shoulder, led him away from the mantel that he was still clutching. He now balanced himself on her shoulder. His head hung down and he kept wiping the blood from his mouth onto the sleeve of his dinner coat.

"Josey. Are you all right? What can I do?"

"Yeah," he said huskily. "All right Cal."

"Let me get you some water."

He restrained her with his hand. "Just hold me up a minute."

Caroline slipped her arm around his waist. She was quite the mistress of herself now. She looked across at John, to find his eyes hostile as he adjusted his tie and brushed his sleeves.

"We've all got to be careful to behave ourselves now," Caroline said loudly. "John is so strong."

Joe was too groggy to understand her. He mumbled something.

Caroline was smiling. "I've got a master now, you see—it's what every girl wants."

"See here——" Delaney began, advancing; but Mr. Jencks checked him.

"Please control your tongue, Caroline!" Mr. Jencks said.

"Joe dear, come upstairs," Caroline whispered. "Let me fix it."

The words roused him. He looked at Caroline steadily, then he looked at Delaney and Jencks. His mind clarified visibly.

"Now let's all try to calm ourselves——" Mr. Jencks began.

Joe pushed Caroline away from him and faced the two men. "No," he said, talking crookedly through his bloody mouth. "This guy's started somethin' and there isn't anybody goin' t' be calm around here till it's finished. You never had a friend in me, Delaney, but now you got the god-damnedest enemy you'll ever have. I never yet met anybody to hate the way I hate you." He leaned forward, swinging his arm in front of him like an ape. "You've got away with murder in this fam'ly long enough, and I'm talkin' literal English——"

"Joe!" Mr. Jencks stepped forward.

"No." Joe gestured him away. "No more lectures. You've brought me up on lectures, and look at me!"

"Now Joseph——"

"Just supposin' we start all over again, Uncle Will. Try t' get rid of some of th' ideas you got about me; because if you don't this fam'ly's goin' to get busted up. D'you think I've been livin' in this house for fun? D'you think I've been sittin' in on your dinner parties because I like 'em? Hell, I've picked

up more dope on you than you've got on yourself. I know how much cash you got and what stocks you got. I know what mortgages of yours're fallin' due. How? 'Cause I hold 'em!"

Mr. Jencks started.

"What you don't own on that boulevard, I own. It was me that worked that Bethlehem raid. I tell you t' start all over again about me, because I'm th' one guy in th' world that's got th' drop on you."

"But my dear Joseph, why? For what purpose? How do you gain?"

"I don't gain. I got just one reason."

"What conceivable reason?"

"I'm sick of seein' this guy"—he indicated Delaney—"in the same house with my mother and neckin' my sister. I said it!" he shouted, checking their interruptions. "Only I'm not sayin' half of it, am I? It's your funeral, Uncle Will. He's your manager and you've given him permission to marry your daughter——"

"Oh now, I'm not going to listen to any more of this!" Delaney cried. "You shouldn't stand for it, Willard."

"Wait a minute," Joe said. "I'm th' boy that gives th' orders from now on, till we get straightened out. I'm orderin' you out of this house."

"This is fantastic!" Delaney cried.

"Yeah," Joe said, "maybe it is. But it's goin' t' be a lot more fantastic if you stick around here. And th' fantastickest is goin' t' happen if you and Uncle Will get on th' witness stand in the Niehlson trial and tell any lies. I know more about that case

than you think I do, Uncle Will, because I happen t' be financin' it for Niehlson. You're goin' t' be called, and all Smedley was doin' this afternoon was feelin' you out, so's he could report your attitude to me, so's I'd know what t' do. And I'm tellin' you flat, if you lie I'll have you in jail in less'n a year, 'cause that Intercity deal was crooked, and you know it. And whether it's goin' t' be prosecuted against you or not depends on whether you please me on th' witness stand or not. See? And if you think that's too fantastic——"

Joe stopped and turned his head slowly toward the hall. The hysteria of two hours ago had in some way made Diana more beautiful, as emotions do beautify women, and had given to her sensuously perfect features a keen electrical quality. Everyone in the room followed Joe's head, as it turned to watch her enter in a blue dress trimmed with silver. Seeing them thus grouped about him, she stopped, and put her hand to her breast. She thought he had told them about her, and noticing the blood on his mouth, she knew that Delaney had struck him. Then she remembered her decision. No one would believe him. Joe was so dull! Her features perceptibly coarsened as she walked into the room. "Is Joe talking again!"

Caroline cried, "Oh!"

A slow sarcastic smile spread over Joe's mouth as he stood looking at her.

"Yeah," he said, "I'm talkin'. But why d'you say 'again'? I never said enough till just now."

"You're always talking," Diana said, sinking into a chair near the door. "What in the name of heaven

is the matter with your mouth, Joseph?" She knew that her position was impregnable.

"Joseph, I think you had better have dinner upstairs," said Mr. Jencks in a serious voice. He advanced.

"Hunh." Joe turned on him. "Who're you t' tell me where I'm goin' t' have dinner?"

"Oh Joe, please." Caroline came up to him.

"What can be the matter with you to-day, Joseph?" Diana cried. "He's been lecturing me too," she said, studying Mr. Jencks, "all afternoon."

Delaney understood the question in Diana's voice, and stepped forward. "I say, Willard. You'd better let me call the doctor. I think I hurt him a good deal." He turned to Diana. "The boy's gone mad, Diana——"

"Mad am I!" Joe cried. "You said it. I'm so goddamned mad that I'm leavin' this house and I'm not comin' back"—he pointed to Delaney—"till you've driven this guy out of my family."

"Your family!" Diana cried.

"I said it. He don't belong in it and he never did."

Caroline began crying. She put her hands over her face and sobbed.

Joe turned to watch her a moment, with his arms folded and his jaws working. No one could speak. Mr. Jencks opened his mouth once and then closed it. Presently, without a word, Joe turned and sauntered out of the room. They saw him take his hat from the hall table; they heard the front door slam behind him. . . .

The butler bowed at the door. "Dinner is served, Madam," he said.

Joe had twice caused the Niehlson trial to be remanded, in order to time it to the meeting of the Bethlehem stockholders on the second of May, and of the P.D.Q. directors on the seventh. Alternating between his extremes of enlightenment and blindness, he was not above sacrificing Niehlson to his will in this way. He had used the iron hand against Herman, as against Willard Jencks, in order to drive John Delaney out of New York. It is hardly worth while debating whether or not he was justified—at least Joe himself would never enter such a debate. He believed in power and he distrusted sentiment. He had had the imagination to combine his own interests with Van Duyn's and with Niehlson's. He unified the three issues and created a holocaust.

On the morning of the twenty-ninth of April Niehlson took the stand in his own defense. The State had presented its case against him: Miss Snell's story—the wound on Grandfather's head—the late Mr. Herd's good health—the apparent regularity of the Intercity deals—Delaney's assertion that Grandfather knew all about Intercity—Niehlson's so-called violence toward Mr. Jencks—the motive of anger, which the State had chosen out of any number of possible motives, on the theory that Grandfather had reprimanded Niehlson for his bookkeeping and that the accountant had lost his temper. All this had been presented in the last few days. Now it was up to Niehlson to show that it was false.

But many of the Swede's answers were unconvincing. The transfer case was wheeled up to the witness stand, with the finance corporation's books on it, and this reminded Herman of Grandfather's "Take them books off'n that contraption," so vividly that he could not concentrate on anything else. Something of his own terror, during that scene with Grandfather, returned to him in the courtroom. There had been mystery in the old man's violence; now there was mystery in the prosecutor's questions. Herman sensed the existence of a whole cosmology behind the eyes of the prosecutor, confronted with which his voice faltered and his vocabulary melted to childish Yes and No.

He did manage to make clear that he had loved Mr. Herd, and had brooded for months over the Intercity entries before revealing them. But in his account of his emotions he was always hindered by the State's objection to the presumption that the entries were irregular. Judge Edwards ruled that this was not a subject of inquiry. Niehlson could only contend that he had believed them to be irregular at that time. The distinction bewildered him, and also led him to the dangerous question of how he had been so certain of Grandfather's ignorance of the entries. On cross-examination Mr. Sykes did a lot of damage at this point.

"What right had you to suppose that Mr. Herd was ignorant of Intercity?"

"I knew. I bane sure."

"Did anybody tell you he was?"

"No, sir."

"Did he ever say anything to indicate that he was ignorant of it?"

"No. To me he do not speak of it."

"Did he talk to you about his business affairs? Were you intimate with his affairs?"

"No. Dot's so."

"Then how did you know what he knew and what he didn't know?"

"I knew dot I know."

That was not very convincing.

But the case was rescued the next morning by Ralph Felting, Grandfather's stockbroker, who gave an account of his telephone conversation with Grandfather, just before the old man's death. Grandfather had said in so many words that he had never heard of Intercity before, and that he had been interested in it "'bout five minutes." This caused a stir and could not be broken down by cross-examination.

Joe was technically known as the star witness, and when Mr. Smedley called him let himself down into the witness chair with slow ease. As Grandfather's disinherited successor he was a romantic figure, in a dark well-tailored suit. He was cool and impressive. He quoted some remarks that Grandfather had made concerning Herman's capacity for work, and explained to the court, with a pleasant smile, that they had originally been directed against his own incapacity for same. He described, as if in personal conversation with the judge, how Niehlson had worried about the Intercity entries and had consulted him three times. He then turned to the courtroom and explained that he himself had be-

lieved the entries to be crooked, but that they were no doubt in very good shape now. This caused laughter, and a reprimand.

When he reached the end of his direct examination Mr. Smedley sat back and allowed the prosecutor to hang himself from the gallows of Joe's mind.

"Mr. Herd, I understand that you were expelled from Yale about this time."

"Yeah. That's right."

"And the year before that you were expelled from Dartmouth?"

"No. I wasn't expelled from Dartmouth."

"You left Dartmouth, though."

"What of it?"

"I say you left Dartmouth!"

"Yeah."

"Why?"

"I was transferred to Yale."

"I see. But from what school did you graduate before attempting these universities?"

"I never graduated from anything, so far's I can remember."

"I should think you'd remember if you had graduated from somewhere."

"I don't remember graduatin' from anywhere."

Some of the spectators snickered. Joe sat back and crossed his legs. Mr. Sykes decided to change the inquiry.

"Now, Mr. Herd, you have just testified that your grandfather was ignorant of Intercity."

"No I didn't."

"What? You deny it?"

"I said that both Niehlson and I believed him to be ignorant at that time."

"I see. That's very different, isn't it?"

"Seems so to me."

"You were disinherited, weren't you?"

"Well, what if I was?"

Mr. Sykes was exasperated and had difficulty in speaking. His face became red as he shook his fist and shouted at the witness, "Don't ask me questions, do you understand?"

"Well, I can't make out what you're drivin' at."

"Never mind what I'm driving at! You are supposed to answer my questions."

"What was your question?"

"Are you in any business?"

"That isn't the question you asked me before."

"I'm asking you another question!"

"Hunh."

"Listen to me, now! You're in that chair to answer questions, do you understand? I'm asking you if you're in any business."

"I'm on the stock market."

"You mean you're a member of the Stock Exchange?"

"Did I say I was a member of the Stock Exchange?"

"Your Honor, I appeal to you to reprimand this witness, and to instruct him to answer my questions . . ."

But the jury found themselves on Joe's side of the argument.

Then, on the morning of May first, Mr. Jencks sat

down in the witness chair and leaned forward. Below him were the lawyers' tables, and Mr. Smedley conferring with his assistant. The jury to his right was hostile. Mr. Jencks grew nervous under the stare of the prisoner's blue eyes. Joe also was staring, but with a different mien. He had his arms folded and his head was thrust forward like a bull's. Beside him, on the first spectator's bench, Mrs. Niehlson was almost crying. Mr. Jencks wondered for a moment why she was almost crying. Oh, of course. He was always forgetting that this was a murder trial. For him, it was a crisis in the affairs of P.D.Q. These people in the courtroom regarded him as a high-class crook. At all costs he must save the reputation of his corporation. The insinuations of the newspapers during the last few days were fantastic. The thought of dishonestly tampering with the finance corporation's books had never entered his head. He had never been dishonest in his life—never intentionally. He must make the court—the reporters—understand that. He drew out a silk handkerchief and mopped his forehead. Even now the stocks of P.D.Q. and Bethlehem Railroad were beginning another day's sickening gyrations on the Exchange.

"What is your name, please?"

"Eh—Willard Jencks."

"And your occupation, Mr. Jencks?"

"I'm a real-estate owner and operator."

"You had certain intimate business connections with the late Mr. Herd, did you not?"

"Yes, I did."

"Will you explain your connection a little more fully, please, Mr. Jencks."

"Well, I was Mr. Herd's partner in the Herd Realty Company. I am president of People's Boulevard Corporation, which Mr. Herd and I organized. I am on the board of the Herd Construction Corporation and a partner in the real-estate brokerage firm of Herd & Jencks."

"I see. At the time of Mr. Herd's death did you hold any position in the Herd Finance Corporation?"

"I was a stockholder and I was on the board."

"Speaking loosely, you were Mr. Herd's general manager, isn't that so?"

"Yes. I was."

The questions droned on. Jencks was watching Smedley's mind, afraid of traps, trying to remember the advice his own lawyer had given him an hour ago. He must not be led into an admission that anything irregular had occurred. With his mind so full of this, and of the financial emergency, it was difficult to remember that Niehlson was on trial for his life. That was not very real. The fact that he had been forced to put up more security with his brokers yesterday was vividly real.

"Well, Mr. Herd was the senior partner of the Herd Realty Company, wasn't he?"

"Oh, yes."

"Mr. Herd's money, therefore, was invested in Intercity, wasn't it?"

"No."

"But indirectly—via the Herd Realty and the Herd Finance, it was?"

"No, I can't say that."

"Did Mr. Herd have no concern in the welfare of Intercity!"

"I say he had no money invested in Intercity."

"But wasn't he at all concerned in the soundness of Intercity as an investment?"

"I object to this question, Your Honor, as indefinite and ambiguous."

"No. I think the question is clear, Mr. Sykes."

"Well now, Mr. Jencks, will you please answer this question. Wasn't Mr. Herd concerned in the success or failure of Intercity?"

Jencks drew his handkerchief from his breast pocket again and touched his forehead. The courtroom was very hot, and packed to the corridors. He had been photographed and interviewed for the past two days. Always, there was this difficulty in answering certain delicate questions which might prove to be the wedges of more incriminating ones. . . .

"Aren't you going to answer this question, Mr. Jencks? This seems to me a simple question."

"Mr. Herd was only remotely concerned in Intercity."

"Remotely concerned in Intercity," Mr. Smedley drawled.

What had he said wrong now? He gripped the arms of the witness chair and was aware of a pain in his stomach. Somehow he felt that they had him now. Remotely . . . "Yes. Concerned in Intercity."

"Remotely."

"Eh—indirectly."

"Have you put that down, Mr. Stenographer?"

"Yes, sir."

"Thanks. Now, Mr. Jencks, as Mr. Herd's general manager you were empowered to act in certain matters without conferring with him?"

"Certainly."

"In matters that remotely concerned him, at least?"

"In many matters—yes."

"Was this Intercity investment a large one, Mr. Jencks?"

"It was a million dollars."

"Yes, we know that. But in relation to Mr. Herd's other investments, direct or indirect, was it a large investment?"

Willard hesitated. His mind was not working well at all. He knew that Smedley was driving at something, but could not find out what it was. He must protect P.D.Q. "No. Not especially large."

"You had handled many other investments as large as this?"

"Oh yes. Larger."

"Were you perplexed about this investment?"

"Oh no!"

"It seemed clear to you that it was a good investment?"

"Yes—certainly. And it turned out exactly as I had predicted."

"You mean you made a profit on it."

"Yes—a substantial profit."

"How much, may I ask?"

"About—eh—five hundred thousand dollars."

"You must, therefore, have been very certain of the investment when you first made it."

"Eh—oh yes."

"You did not, therefore, consult Mr. Herd about it?"

Mr. Jencks started. The lawyer's questions had been so perfectly timed that they had blinded him. If you will observe open-field runners in football you will discover this same phenomenon of timing, which acts as an interference screen on the nerves of each tackler; and in boxing and in fencing the masters perform the same legedermain upon helpless antagonists. With rhythmic ease Mr. Smedley had led the witness to the brink of the fundamental question, and now asked him to plunge. Everyone except young Herd sat forward tensely, waiting for the answer. Mr. Smedley did not repeat his question, allowing the witness to face the courtroom alone.

And he had always said that he would not send Niehlson to the chair, no matter what the cost. Behind a fuddled and untrained mind, Mr. Jencks's heart was clear. Joe knew this—had known it ever since the morning of Grandfather's death. He knew that Uncle Will would not lie in the face of the question. For almost thirty seconds he watched Uncle Will trying to recover; trying to shift; unable to shift. At length Judge Edwards leaned toward the witness. "You will please answer the defendant's question, Mr. Jencks."

"I did not consult Mr. Herd about this investment."

The effect of his unrecognizable voice on the courtroom startled Mr. Jencks. He had not realized, perhaps, how many souls had been waiting for this answer. It was several minutes before Judge Edwards restored order. Mrs. Niehlson broke down. There were tears in Herman's eyes. Even Joe seemed affected. Mr. Jencks felt himself to be a good, an honest citizen. Tears came also to his eyes. He took out his silk handkerchief again.

"Mr. Herd was ignorant then of this investment in Intercity at the time Mr. Niehlson showed him the books?"

"Yes."

"There is no doubt in your mind about this?"

"No," Mr. Jencks said, afraid that his lower lip was trembling, "there is no doubt about this—in my mind."

Thus Niehlson's case was won, in all but the formalities. The trial lasted two days more, but few people had any doubt about the jury's decision. Yet it must not be supposed that Joe was softened by this sacrifice that Mr. Jencks had made on the witness stand. It was the first of May, and Joe's purpose would not be fulfilled until the evening of the third. On the morning of the second he sponsored the following editorial, by Jed Cohen, in the *Express:*

SPECULATIVE CONSERVATISM

It appears to the *Express* that investors in the People's Development Corporation have been holding a more speculative property than is generally realized.

The testimony in the Niehlson trial, as given by Willard Jencks, president of People's, and John L. Delaney, president of Herd Finance, a closely allied corporation, produced the alarming information that, a year ago, the finance corporation took over a speculative airplane concern whose purpose was no less than the establishment of an air field along the middle West Side of Manhattan. That the Herd interests made half a million dollars in this deal is aside from the question of P.D.Q.'s reputed conservatism, a policy which has, apparently, been abandoned with the death of the late Joseph Herd, who was never informed of the deal.

We have been at some pains to investigate the position of P.D.Q., and in view of our analysis we do not recommend it to anyone but the bears. The corporation owns the following subsidiaries: Wholesale Grocers' Extension Development, Cloak and Suit Makers House-to-Factory Association, Lunch-at-Home Inc., Mid-Town Air and Light Inc., Atlantic Piers Inc., Western Gate Inc., Paulist Fathers' House and Traffic Welfare Association Inc. . . . .

We submit the balance sheets of a number of these subsidiaries, which we find to be typical of all of them. . . . .

It will be seen that an item of five hundred thousand dollars is written into the asset column of each subsidiary, listed as "Share in Boulevard." This item appears in every balance sheet. We do not understand the entry, beyond the obvious suggestion that a boulevard through the properties owned is contemplated; but since there is no boulevard at present, a "share" in it can have nothing more than a speculative and somewhat intangible value. We are the more surprised to find the asset given a real and tangible value in the subsidiaries of P.D.Q., and until further enlightenment, would rather find ourselves on the short side of the stock than on the long one.

That day P.D.Q. declined five points. Before attending the meeting of the Bethlehem stockholders in the late afternoon, Mr. Jencks distributed the last of his available collateral among his numerous brokers, to guard himself against the really severe crash in People's which some of his friends were predicting. The thought of selling the stock was intolerable to him. He would hold on till the end—he would rather go bankrupt than lose control of the only entity he loved in the world. For Mr. Jencks had little enough to love.

PART V

On the morning of that fateful third of May Joe arrived at his office early. This place contrasted with Mr. Jencks's Babylonian temple at the other end of Forty-second Street, being but two rooms on the second story of a brick building partly leased out in tenements. It was the dirtiest house on the north side of the street, one block to the east of the ground that Jencks had bought for his boulevard. In its basement was a messy pants-pressing shop, a pet shop, and an obscure watchmaker. On the first floor a sign painter had his headquarters, and on the opposite side of the hall a shabby door was thumb-tacked with cards advertising magic tricks, novelties, and taro cards. The brick façade was draped with fire escapes. You entered the building by a high brownstone stoop, threaded a dark corridor, and went up wooden stairs with plates of tin tacked onto them. On the landings of the stairs there was murky brown linoleum; and this also ran the length of the second hall, past a door that advertised the repairing of music boxes. Joe had established his wrecking machine in two front rooms. The furniture had been assembled from

second-hand stores in the district. One room contained three stenographers, and in the other Joe had a battered desk near the window. His lieutenant, Gus Javitz, had a table scattered with a few futile papers. Gus was a West Side bum chiefly useful for running down mortgages and reporting the obscure deals on the boulevard. All this equipment which Joe had so hurriedly assembled was reminiscent of Grandfather's old offices on lower Broadway, from which he had been ousted by Willard Jencks.

For half an hour Joe sorted through a steel filing cabinet, and from time to time made annotations on a map. He now owned two properties in the path of the boulevard, about one and a half million dollars in first mortgages, and three hundred thousand dollars in seconds. During March and April he had called another three hundred thousand dollars' worth of seconds and had forced Jencks to pay them in cash. Looking over his present list, he found there was a small second mortgage due, and marked it. Another half hour was devoted to arithmetical calculations. At eight-thirty he picked up the telephone.

"Grosvenor 9706. That's right."

"Hello?" It was Van Duyn's hurried voice.

"Mornin'," Joe said. "Wanta talk to you 'bout Phelps."

"Yes. I've got an appointment with him at nine."

"Fine. Now let's see. We got P.D.Q. closed last night at thirty-nine."

"Right."

"You offer to buy it off Phelps at just that price."

"No higher?"

"No sir. Not a nickel. He's held it too long, and he knows it. He can't get thirty-nine to-day, and he knows that too. She's a hundred and ten thousand shares."

"That's right."

"That'll cost you four million two hundred and ninety thousand smacks."

"Check."

"You can raise it?"

"Sure."

"Now don't forget to tell him straight that you're out to control it and you're goin' t' fight. Tell him if you gotta drive it off th' board you'll get it. He don't think much of it anyhow—least I got reason to s'pose he don't."

"Yeah. I've told him most of that already."

"He b'lieves you're drivin' it off?"

"Yeah."

"Don't let him forget it. And get it out of your head that he and Jencks is pullin' together. They aren't. Phelps don't like all this Niehlson publicity—least I got reason to s'pose he don't."

"Yeah."

"Don't know how much Jencks has borrowed on th' estate, but here's what'd win th' toasted hamburger if you could get it across."

"Yeah?"

"That he oughta protect Jencks from himself. See? 'Course you can't say that, but you oughta plant it somehow: Jencks lost his head—lucky thing he's got a guy like Phelps sittin' on Grandfather's eggs—mustn't let a big fortune like this get mixed up in

speculation—bad for public psychology. Some line like that and not too damned much of it."

"Yeah yeah."

"And do your talkin' with a check. Four million, twø hundred and ninety thousand."

"I'll get it certified and have it over to him by ten-fifteen."

"Atta boy. Anything new?"

"I got all the boys lined up. If you have a ticker down your way just watch it."

"Don't own a ticker."

"Then use your imagination."

Joe laughed. "Don't mind if I do. So long Van."

"So long."

Joe clicked the receiver. "Jenkins 9284. That's right."

A butler answered.

"Wanta speak to Mr. Claypoole," Joe said. "Mr. Herd talkin'."

"I'm sorry, sir; Mr. Claypoole isn't awake yet, sir."

"Well go wake him."

"Eh—yes, sir."

Joe put his feet on the desk and leaned back in a creaky chair. He hung the telephone between his fourth and fifth fingers and fumbled in his pocket for a cigarette.

"Hello." The voice was muffled with sleep.

"Hello. Joe Herd talkin'. What the hell? Do you think this is Christmas? You gotta answer some bells to-day so take off your pajamas and get goin'."

"Is this you, Joe?"

"Oh for crysake. You go put your head in a basin and call me back."

"No. I'm awake now."

"Well have you got your Bethlehem program for to-day?"

"Yes. I'm to sell all that stuff I had so much trouble buying."

"That's right. The idea is to liquidate enough so's you can get some cash over to Van soon as possible. He's payin' out over four million dollars this mornin'. Besides that, he's short and may have to cover. Bethlehem's hard as hell to borrow. You dump your stuff first, and start some sellin', as if you were sellin' on that news this mornin'. Van'll cover up when he sees his chance."

"Yes, you told me all that before."

"Sell it all through Harry and I'll have him set to pay you quick. What's your opening?"

"It's in at the market."

"What! How many?"

"How many what?"

"Shares! Did you think I was pricin' eggs?"

"Fifty-three thousand."

"How many's your cousin got?"

"How many what?"

"Hunh."

"Oh, I see. He has forty thousand. It's my uncle."

"Well whichever he is he's goin' t' give you hell for votin' the way you did."

"That's what I've been saying. Mr. Jones says it'll be all right later."

"Sure it'll be all right."

"That's good."

"So long. And don't get mixed up and think you're sellin' broccoli. . . . Hello. Hello Central. Give me Taylor 5400. That's right."

Joe lit the cigarette that had been dangling from his lips and shook the match lazily.

"Good-morning. Gale & Townshend."

"Mr. Gale Jr., please. Mr. Herd talkin'."

"Hello?"

"You up already? This is Joe."

"Morning Mucifer. What's happened now?"

"I'm callin' up about Claypoole."

"The financial prodigy——"

"That's right. He's goin' t' sell a lot of Bethlehem down your way."

"Yeah."

"He's got fifty-three thousand and he says it's all at the market."

"Well it isn't all at the market, but it doesn't make much difference anyway."

"How come?"

"It's a cock-eyed time to sell, if you ask me. Everybody's selling his pants. Don't think we'll open."

"Eh?"

"Oh we'll open. But honest to God, it's awful."

"There isn't any way of figurin' about how much Claypoole'll get when he sells."

"Christ no! D'you think I'm an astrologer?"

"All right, but the point is Van wants some money quick, so John's goin' right down to your place for a check, and I want you t' give him a check for a couple of million."

"Nothing doing."

"What's th' matter? Broke?"

"D'you think this is the Federal Reserve Bank? The Bethlehem we sell for Claypoole to-day won't be delivered till to-morrow, and we don't get our cash for it till it's delivered. Where d'you think I'm going to raise two million dollars between now and then? Use your clockwork, Mucifer."

"Well, can't you 'dvance him some?"

"Not two million."

"One, then."

"Well, I'll see what I can do. It'll cost him some interest."

"Say, you're not givin' much away this mornin', are ya."

"Oh go to hell!"

"Do you charge for drinkin' cups too?"

"Don't get fresh. I'll give him something right away."

"An' certify it."

"What for?"

"Comes from your shop."

"Aw go to hell."

"So long. . . . Hello. Hello Central. Western 3546. That's right."

"Hallo. I Aaron spikkink."

"Hello Aaron? This is Joe Herd."

"Oh-h gut mornink, Mr. Hoid. I vas just——"

"Say listen, Aaron, what's th' idear of lettin' this mortgage on Western Gate go by?"

"I know, Mr. Hoid. I just vas——"

"What th' hell kind of a business d'you set your-

self up for anyhow? Maybe ten grand is too little for you nowadays, enh?"

"I vas just——"

"Gettin' kind of a swelled head since you've been workin' for me, enh?"

"I just vas——"

"You better come down a coupla sizes, Ikey, or I'll clean you outa your shop."

"Let me spik! Now leesten, Mr. Hoid. I took dat moigitch up vid de Vestern Gaters—I tell you I did."

"What d'ya mean, took it up?"

"I vent to dem. I svare to God I did, Mr. Hoid. But leesten, Mr. Hoid, dot moigitch iss a good investments. De Vestern Gaters dey will gif you eight per cent. on a new moigitch."

"What th' hell do I care if they give me twenty per cent.! Didn't I tell you t' close it when it came up? Did you think I was practisin' English?"

"But I vas dere and no one vas dere."

"You just told me they offered you eight per cent.!"

"Oh sure. But now ef you vud leesten——"

"No, I won't listen! You get the cash for that mortgage to-day or I'll run you outa business. See? I ain't in business for guys like you to waste my time for me. If I don't see a ten-thousand-dollar check on my desk to-night you can kiss me good-bye."

"All r-right, all r-right."

"Now don't monkey with Western Gate. Call up a guy named John Delaney——"

"Vait till I write it down—vait—a pencil—a moment——"

Joe exhaled cigarette smoke.

"All right. Chon vich?"

"John Delaney. D-e-l-a-n-e-y."

"Oh, sure."

"Temple 8396. That's his private number. He's the guy behind Western Gate——"

"Oh-h-h-h."

"It's either ten thousand cash or a move to foreclose by five o'clock to-night!"

"Yes Mr. Hoid."

"So long." Joe hung up the receiver, sat back, and scratched his head. Presently he swung his chair forward and gave the operater another number.

"The Harold Agency. Good-morning."

"Wanta speak to Mr. MacPherson. Hello Mac? This is Joe. Say Mac, you better trail Delaney again to-day."

"Right away?"

"Yeah. He may skip."

"All right Joe. Catch him at his office?"

"That's right. So long."

He had scarcely set the telephone down when it began ringing.

"Hello Joe?" It was Harry Gale's voice.

"Yeah Harry."

"Listen, your old man just called me——"

"Jencks?"

"Yeah. He wanted to know your telephone number. He sounds cuckoo. Maybe you better speak to him."

"What's the matter with him?"

"He's panicky."

"Give'm my number."

"All right. 'Bye."

Mr. Jencks had not slept all night. The meeting of the Bethlehem stockholders yesterday afternoon, and the nightmare decision of the majority to turn down the Keystone merger, had left him utterly unable to organize his mind. He could think of no possible justification for such an action, and neither could anyone else. A man named Claypoole had been responsible for the vote, but no one knew much about him. The name, of course, was historical in the affairs of Bethlehem Railroad, but this particular upstart had never been active before, and should never have become active. The further he advanced into life the more disillusioned Mr. Jencks became concerning human nature. Keynton had actually approached Claypoole about the merger six months ago and had received a favorable reply. Now this! The young ass! Millions were going to be wiped away in the market to-day—one could foretell that. Mr. Jencks was at one moment determined to dump all his holdings, at the next, to hold them through any decline. This was certainly no time to sell, with everyone selling. The very mild decline of P.D.Q. yesterday, after the news of the Niehlson trial and the editorial in the *Express*, had encouraged him to hope his way through the emergency. Perhaps P.D.Q., having declined all month to the neighborhood of forty, would remain near thirty-five; and perhaps Bethlehem would not go so far down either. No doubt Joe was neither so powerful nor so diabolic as he pretended to be. That Claypoole who had voted against the Bethlehem merger (how the devil had he got a majority of the stock?) must have something better in mind for

Bethlehem. He would be there buying Bethlehem this morning! Of course. That was a clever idea. Monroe, Ellis, and Keynton had not, perhaps, had the power that they had been presumed to have; there was this Claypoole, a giant of a force; and although Mr. Jencks did not know him, or where he lived, he decided to side with him to-day and save his fortune from being thrown away. But then the recollection of the last Bethlehem raid, when he had been forced to put up more margin, would cyclone through his mind, and he would feverishly decide to sell everything at the very stroke of the gong. He paced the floor all night. He was weak, and knew that a few more days of this would finish him. Steiner had said that the Board of Plan and Survey would have an answer to the boulevard proposition on May third. A favorable answer would save him. He saw himself making the announcement to a group of reporters. "We are pleased to announce that our long and arduous planning has finally," etc. There would be a twenty-million-dollar profit to announce to P.D.Q. stockholders next week. Think of that! The stock would climb and climb the tape! Then they could do anything they wanted to Bethlehem. Yes. He would take as little as seventy million dollars, should Steiner offer him that. . . .

He did have a few hours' sleep early in the morning, and therefore arrived at his office somewhat late. He was haggard and jumpy. There was something in the air on that morning of May third that no one in the Street will forget. At Forty-second Street this atmosphere was less concentrated, yet a sense of disaster

was more or less universal. Jencks went into conference at once with Delaney, who advised him to draw more credit on the Herd estate. Mr. Jencks called up Phelps, who was himself in conference with someone. The executor's voice was ominous. He said he was going out immediately on important business, but that he would be uptown in the course of the morning and would drop in. Jencks told him to make it as near ten o'clock as possible; Phelps promised to be there by eleven.

As he laid down the receiver Delaney silently handed him the *Morning Express*, which he had not had time to read. The most terrible fears of the night were revived when he read:

> The action of the Bethlehem stockholders in turning down their merger with Keystone yesterday fulfills a long prophecy by this paper to which insufficient attention has been paid in speculative circles. Bethlehem has continued to sell in the eighties in anticipation of this merger, at a price more than fifteen times present earnings. That Bethlehem has earned more than this in the past seems to us a slim argument in a period of violent leveling of prices like the present. We are aware that a certain group has been holding Bethlehem for one hundred and that this group was severely disappointed by the vote taken yesterday; and we anticipate a general scramble to get out of this inflated stock and a heavy drive upon it by the bears.

"You'll have to support it if you don't want to get wiped out," Delaney said.

"Support it!"

"Exactly. You've got to get Keynton and Monroe

2nd form a pool. Peg it somewhere. If it ever gets started down nobody'll catch it long of fifty."

"Um. I have practically no cash, John."

"Let me see what I can do with Monroe."

"Yes! Will you, John? And hurry!"

Delaney hastened to his own office. He was not saying much about it, but he had sold his own Bethlehem a week ago.

Mr. Jencks sat down to his mail. His hands were trembling.

CITY OF NEW YORK
BOARD OF PLAN AND SURVEY
Room 1689 Municipal Building
New York
Telephone, Anchorage 9402

Oscar Mayes, Chairman — James Nolan, Secretary
Fred L. Lefferts, Vice Chairman

Mr. Willard Jencks,
Herd Realty Company,
Herd Realty Building,
New York.

DEAR MR. JENCKS:

The Board of Plan and Survey of the City of New York has been considering for nearly two years certain plans which you submitted to them, and notably the offer of a strip of property 300 feet wide, running from Washington Street at Thirteenth, between Ninth and Tenth avenues, to Broadway at Sixty-eighth Street.

We understand from your last report that you have already purchased eighty per cent. of this strip, or hold it on contract; that another ten per cent. will eventually be

purchased by you; and that the remaining ten per cent., being the property of common carriers and of the City of New York, cannot be purchased by private means. The price quoted by you for all the land within the strip which can be purchased by you (approximately ninety per cent.) is $80,000,000.00.

Included in this price, you have offered the city full plans, surveys, reports, and engineering data for the construction by the city of a boulevard 150 feet wide through the center of this strip, and full plans and estimates for the erection by the city of two rows of six-story elevator apartments, one on either side of the proposed street, to be leased at very moderate rentals.

Included in your general plan is an amortization scheme of one and one-half per cent. of the rent of the above apartment houses, by which the total cost of the above investment, estimated by you to be in the neighborhood of one hundred and fifty million dollars, including price of land, laying of sewers, and paving, could be paid back to the city in fifty-four years.

While the board has been unanimous in praising your public spirit in the promotion of this boulevard, it has asked me to inform you of its decision that the project is not a practicable one at present. Not only does the price quoted by you appear to us excessive, when measured by the present assessed valuations of the properties involved, but we are not unanimously of your opinion that this boulevard would afford much relief to traffic congestion.

Moreover, it would be contrary to the policy of the present democratic administration to purchase a public highway from private corporations, unless it could be shown indisputably that no more than a reasonable profit was accruing to those corporations. Although the expense of condemnation of all this property would no doubt be considerable, should the city desire to attempt it, the

board is not of the opinion that it would be so large as to justify purchasing the property from you at the price which you have quoted.

I have had several conferences with the mayor in regard to this matter, and am authorized by him to inform you that he stands behind the decision of our board. He further requests me to remind you that he has frequently expressed his approval of your general plan, should it be given the benefit of public discussion for a year.

I know your contention that publicity would add immensely to the cost of your purchases. On the other hand, were this a municipal enterprise, as the board believes it should be, there would be no such difficulty in purchasing property that could be had by the normal processes of condemnation.

I thank you in the name of the board for your coöperation and evident public spirit.

Very truly yours,

OSCAR MAYES

Chairman.

Mr. Jencks was stunned, and not by surprise so much as by a sense of inevitability, as if this letter had been preparing itself for months, as if it had been mailed last February and had now at last finally reached him. He was a prey to that very cosmic sensation that he had once felt when closing Grandfather's safe for the night, except that he was now no longer holding the cosmos together, or supporting it; his mind was now the pavement down which the chariot was clattering to its Lethian destination. Mr. Jencks held on to the corner of his desk while sharp pains shot through his duodenum. As he sat there, clinging as it were to himself, forty corporations crumbled

around him, their names grotesquely scattering through the air like fragments of a kaleidoscope. And presently People's Development, even, began bulging on all sides, and would, in a second now, in a split second . . . No! Mr. Jencks arose violently to shake the hallucination from his mind. Something could be done. He paced the room with his hands behind his back. Had Joe done this? Inconceivable! By what right? By what human motive? All the events of the past month now encircled his consciousness, crowding it. The city around him became a personality. But he had millions to defend himself from the city! He seized the telephone and called up Charlton Phelps. He had already borrowed two million dollars on the estate, but why not ten more, fifteen more? With fifteen million a man can stop anything. . . .

"I'm sorry, sir. Mr. Phelps has just gone out."

"What! Where is he? When will he be in?"

"He said he wouldn't be back until after eleven o'clock. Is there any message, please?"

"Don't you know where he is?"

"No, I'm *so*rry. Any message, please?"

Mr. Jencks clamped the receiver onto the hook. He stood huddled over the telephone as if he were cold. He felt as if he were standing at the North Pole, alone. Joe had put him there. Joe. Joe Herd! All his life he had served the Herds. It was inconceivable, and yet here he was. His eyes caught the clock on his desk. Ten-ten. Good God, it had already opened! The price of Bethlehem was somewhere. The price of P.D.Q. was somewhere. And without the boulevard.

Call up Conway. No. Leave it alone. Damn it, he had testified in Niehlson's favor. An outlandish green-eyed fiend he had been harboring in his house these ten years. And who knew his address? Delaney. No, don't tell Delaney. Gale perhaps; Gale perhaps . . .

Five minutes later he gave Joe's number to the operator.

"'Lo?"

"Hello. Joe?"

"Yeah."

"This is your Uncle Will. Willard Jencks."

"Yeah, sure. What can I do for you?"

"Do for me! My dear Joseph, are you going to take advantage of the situation in Bethlehem?"

"What d'you mean, take advantage of it?"

"Are you going to drive it—down?"

"It's already down."

"Eh?"

"Least I s'pose it is. Don't own a ticker, however."

"It's going off?"

"What d'you expect. A bull drive?"

"Joseph this is a very serious and critical moment. Where are you?"

"In my office."

"I know. But can't you drop in here? I've got a lot to talk over with you. I'm sure we could make some —arrangement——"

"What kind of arrangement?"

"Well, you know, your grandfather's will. Now I've been feeling lately——"

"Don't want any of it."

"Now Joseph this is a great emergency——"

"Uncle Will, you and I got just one talkin' point."

"What's that?"

"Is Delaney still with you?"

"Still with me? Eh——"

"Then don't bother me no more!"

"Joe! Wait a minute! What's your idea about John? I've never been able to see your point. I really think you may be mistaken, my boy. I think you may be doing John an injustice."

"I'm not doin' him an injustice. If you can't see what I mean you got no business talkin' about service and honesty. If you want some dope on Delaney, call up Mother."

"Your Mother!"

"And ask her to tell you about him. She *knows*." The receiver clicked into the hook.

Mr. Jencks allowed his own receiver to drop quietly, and he sat holding the telephone and staring across the room at the little black safe. What did Diana know about Delaney? The suggestion that she knew him secretly was terrible. But then, she disliked Delaney, if anything. Damn it. Joe was really a fiend. He was the kind of person you read about in newspapers and wonder how such evil can possibly exist. Also, he was inevitable. There came over Mr. Jencks a sense of time. The present disaster seemed to extend back, years and years, to origins which he could not understand. He had felt the same thing about the letter from Oscar Mayes, but now that letter itself became linked into the years. He groped backward into a region occupied by Frank Herd, Diana, Grandfather, Delaney, and himself, long, long

ago; and was terrified by the sensation of motives other than his own, controlling other people's lives, staring out through other people's eyes.

Perhaps it is impossible to help humanity, for humanity is always alien to its saviors and prophets. The motives of humanity are recondite in their sources and cannot be ascertained. No one wants to be served; the poor want to live in slums, and the Wall Sreet clerks want to commute in crowded infectious subways twice a day. Persons like Joe and Diana and Oscar Mayes; persons like Phelps, Van Duyn, Monroe; all of them want to act upon motives of their own—no, insist upon these motives, the sources of which no one else in the world can understand.

That was the trouble with the People's Boulevard.

The telephone buzzed. "Hello! Hello Jencks?"

"Yes."

"This is Conway."

"Yes. Yes, Conway."

"I'm sorry, Jencks, but we've got to have more security quick!"

"Wa—wa—market bad?"

"Haven't you heard?"

"No."

"It's broke wide open. Bethlehem is off fifteen points on that news this morning!"

"Fif——"

"P.D.Q. just came out at twenty-four!"

"Twen——"

"That price's from the floor. The tape's so late it don't mean anything. Worst smash yet."

"How much do you wa-want me to put up?"

"At least two million."

"What! Why I could nearly buy outright!"

"And that's the only thing to be done. We're advising all our customers to cover a hundred per cent., if they want to hold through this. There's no telling what'll happen. Two million won't cover you by any means, Mr. Jencks. Have you got it?"

"How soon, C-conway?"

"Get me something inside half an hour. Follow up with the rest some time to-day. If you can't get it, for crysake *tell* me!" Conway shouted. Then he hung up.

"All right." Mr. Jencks spoke into a closed line. He returned his own receiver gently. There it was. All but a few thousand dollars' worth of the P.D.Q. stock he owned was out at various brokerage houses. He was licked. Two million was too much. He had some mortgages, however. Yes, a few mortgages in the safe—not many. Still . . . five hundred thousand dollars altogether might hold. They couldn't go down much farther. Five hundred thousand might hold until Phelps came. Phelps would have to advance him the two million. That was easy. Why did he feel that he was licked? Tired perhaps? His stomach hurt. The walls of the city were close upon him. Some were bulging. Some were falling from the top. At an angle, falling. The roar of people's motives seemed to penetrate the glass windows of the Herd Building, as if there were no windows. He could not raise credit on the building—Phelps had that. Phelps, who didn't need it. He was drowning in the motives of Manhat-

tan. He would get the mortgages. And the remaining P.D.Q. stock. He struggled to his feet, with his eyes fixed intently on the owlish black safe at the other end of the room. He must have some water first. That would clear his mind so that he could open the combination. He staggered to the corner of the room where the water cooler stood. Five hundred thousand in the safe—yes. He pushed the button with his thumb; water gurgled into the glass. The motive of the water. He raised the glass to his lips, he swallowed the water. It was cold. It chilled his guts. A violent shiver passed through him. The motive of the guts. Willard Jencks, baron of real estate . . . the public would know as a bankrupt. . . .

Turning toward the little black safe, Mr. Jencks collapsed.

The telephone rang on Joe Herd's desk on West Forty-second Street. Joe excused himself to the well-dressed man sitting beside him. "'Lo."

"Hello Joe. This is Jerry Kaufman down at Herd's."

"Yeah Jerry."

"Mr. Jencks just passed out."

"Passed out, eh?"

"Yeah. They've taken him home in a ambulance. They say he got stung on the market."

"Hunh."

"Thought you'd like to know."

"Sure. Thanks Jerry. See ya soon."

"That's it. So long Joe."

Joe set down the telephone and turned to Oscar

Mayes. His face showed no emotion whatever. "As I was sayin'," he said, "we practically control P.D.Q. right now. 'Nother two or three hours and we'll have it.

"Now what I want to make clear is you're dealin' with an entirely new crowd and an entirely new proposition. We've got the cash to build the street and apartments and everythin' ourselves, and we got the drag to get the special legislation and franchises that that would require: but we aren't particularly anxious to let ourselves into all that work, and so we're makin' you an absolutely square proposition."

Mr. Mayes smiled. He was a heavy man, well groomed, with black hair and a large face. "Let's hear it," he said.

"Well in th' first place," Joe said, "soon as we can get our hands on all the books we'll find out just exactly what was paid for every parcel of land on th' strip. Jencks was askin' you eighty million, wasn't he?"

"That's right."

"'Course I haven't seen th' books, but from what I've picked up around here, P.D.Q. hasn't paid more'n fifty million for the whole works. Now if we make you a price of fifty million, even fifty-five, in any case it'll be at cost, and we'll prove it by the books. We don't figure on makin' any money off th' city. Where we make money is in th' rise the stock will have when we cash in on all these frozen assets. See?"

"Ah," Mr. Mayes said. "I see."

"Now figurin' your purchase price from us at

fifty million, let's do some more figurin'. I got here" —Joe produced several sheets of estimates— "Jencks's own estimates for the cost of puttin' up th' apartments, pavin' th' street, 'n' everythin'. After purchase of the property, his figure is $56,500,000. If all your property, includin' that which you'll have to buy yourself, costs you $51,500,000, this brings th' total cost of th' whole works up to $108,000,000."

Mayes whistled. "Jencks made it a hundred and fifty," he said.

"That's because he was soakin' you," Joe said. "Now listen. Usin' that amortization scheme of his, this means you could pay off the whole damned investment in forty-six years."

"Um."

"And you won't have to charge any kind of rent, either. Let's see. There's one hundred sixty-seven buildin' plots. Um." He figured for a moment. "We'll say in the neighborhood of thirty-two thousand dollars a year per plot. That's cheap."

"Thirty-two thousand? You said it."

"That'll boil down to between fifteen and eighteen dollars a room per month," Joe said. "And space for trees."

"Very good. Fine."

"It'll be a new stunt," Joe said, "havin' the city put up apartments for the folks. It'll get away big. Th' main thing is to have th' idear come from the city."

"That's it. We want to make a campaign issue out of it."

"Why say," Joe said, "th' boys around here are

nuts on the subjec' already. If you don't think this'll liven up th' West Side, go talk to Peter Mulligan."

"All right, I will."

"And Davis," Joe said, "and Schwartz, and Jeff Harmon."

"Um."

"Now let me give you a tip," Joe said. "'Course you don't have t' spread it around to anyone you don't like, but P.D.Q. is bound t' snap back to its old levels as soon as you make us the offer to buy this junk we got on our hands. You can get the stock to-day in the twenties, and there's fifteen or twenty points in it at that. I'm tellin' you this straight and you might as well realize that you're not dealin' with crooks." He fixed his green eyes on Mayes and thrust his head forward.

"Sure. I know that," Mayes said. "A chip off the old block, Joe."

"You mean m'grandfather?" Joe asked warily.

"Who else?"

"Hunh," the younger Herd grunted. "Don't mind if I am."

John Delaney had been pacing the floor of his office all morning. He could get no help from Monroe and none from Keynton in Philadelphia. They were through with Bethlehem. Ellis was wiped out. Willard would be caught in a few minutes. Willard had passed out—he was too soft for this kind of business—and no one could get into the safe. There must be something in the safe. If not, it was time to call the Jencks family a bad risk.

For the tenth time Delaney grabbed his telephone and told the operator to call the Jencks house.

"Hello! Hello, Jerome, this is Mr. Delaney speaking again. Is Mr. Jencks able to talk yet?"

"I don't know, sir. Shall I try again, sir?"

"Yes, do."

There was a pause. Presently a receiver was lifted. Delaney hunched himself over his instrument as he heard Jencks's feeble voice.

"John?"

"Yes Willard. How are you?"

"Better, I think. They don't want—what's happened now?"

"Nothing! Nothing at all, Will. It's all right. Listen, we can get out of this."

"No—we can't—John. Everything's gone."

"Willard! Listen to me. We don't need much!"

"Has Conway sold?"

"No! No he hasn't. He's waiting."

"There isn't enough."

"Willard give me the combination of that safe."

"No John."

"Don't be a fool. Do you want to go bankrupt? I tell you, give it to me. Conway'll take anything."

There was silence at the other end.

"God dammit!" Delaney shouted. "I've lost my shirt! If you lose yours too we're all broke. Even if there's only mortgages in there I'll take 'em down and shove 'em at him. He'll hold till I sell 'em. Then we'll get something from Phelps."

There was still silence.

"For God's sake, Will, give me that combination!"

Jencks's voice came over the wire, more feebly than before. "Six—three right to nine—six left to twenty-seven—right to ninety-two—left to four——"

Delaney heard a thud in the receiver, as if the telephone had fallen out of Jencks's hand to the floor. He crouched over his instrument, working the hook up and down. Suddenly he hung up and rushed out of his office. He hurried past Miss Cole and into the great, empty room whose paneled walls had seen the collapse of two successive financiers.

Closing the door behind him, Delaney crossed to the safe that squatted there like an evil black dwarf. The polished nickel knob gleamed sarcastically as he advanced. He grasped it and began setting it: 6—9—27—92—4. He wrenched the handle. The lock clanked. He tugged open the heavy little door and began a search of the papers—plans, estimates, titles, mortgages. Those mortgages would help. Not enough, perhaps. Try it. He stuffed them into his pocket. He found ten thousand shares of P.D.Q. Not worth much any more. He stuffed these into his pocket also. Just before closing the safe he saw some tinted paper in a small lower division. He grabbed it. Twenty thousand dollars' worth of bonds! Willard had probably forgotten——

"Mr. Delaney."

He started terribly. What a confounded position in which to be discovered! He turned. "Well?" It was Miss Cole.

"Mr. Conway is on the phone, sir. Shall I connect him with this desk?"

"Oh—Conway—yes." With the bonds in his hand

he crossed to the desk and raised the telephone. "Hello. Hello."

"Hello. Delaney?"

"Yeah. I'm——"

"Sorry Delaney. Had to dump it."

"What? My God Conway!"

"It absolutely could not be held," Conway shouted. "I gave Jencks half an hour. It's nearly noon and nothing's showed up."

"You had no right, Conway——"

"I had every right. I apologize for taking it, but as it is, Jencks owes us a couple of hundred thousand. There's no bottom to this and he's better off than he was. Good-bye."

Delaney stood with the telephone in his hand staring at the opened safe. He returned the receiver slowly and without looking at it. Almost immediately it buzzed. He picked it up.

"Hallo. Mr. Delaney?"

"Yes."

"At lest! Diss is I. Aaron spikkink."

"Who?"

"I. Aaron."

"What in hell do you want?"

"I got here second moigitch by Vestern Gate Corporation. She's run down. Dey tell me come to you."

"How much is it?"

"Ten t'ousan'. You pay her maybe to-day."

"Nothing doing."

"I got horder to foreclose if she iss not paid by fife in cesh dis afternoon."

"You can go to hell!" He flung the receiver back,

shrugged, and walked out to the middle of the room.

A bad risk, this Jenksian idealism. It made good advertising copy, but when you got down to facts . . . Delaney shrugged again. He had told Willard that he had lost his own shirt, but this was not strictly true. He had lost; but having dumped most of his stocks a week ago he was not wiped out. Business is based on facts, not on philosophy. Capital is selfish, and it was Delaney's belief that this should be overtly stated. He had never realized how deeply Willard believed in his own camouflage. It was in this attitude toward facts that Delaney had a fundamental sympathy with Joe. He hated Joe, but he did not despise him: on the contrary, he had sold stocks last week because of the threats Joe had made. God damn it! Here was Willard Jencks as broke as a bucket shop, and not very much better prepared for an investigation, either. Although, to be sure, there was nothing illegal in a man's speculating. Grandfather's death had caused it—Niehlson—the Intercity jam which had tied up a million and a half of Willard's cash. That had caused it. How? Joe. Joe again. Joe everywhere.

A slow smile spread on Delaney's lips. That damned little green-eyed runt had guts. He had a kind of rugged vigor—not honesty exactly (what the hell is honesty?)—a sense of reality. Hell. Everyone but himself had underrated Joe. He himself had taken a chance against Joe. Now it was time to get out from under the steam roller. He must leave the country. He had cash in the bank; he had last summer's passport; he had his friends in Paris, Vienna,

Stockholm. What the hell? You could get to Africa on less than a fortune. You could walk over dusty trails, and walk into the forests, and lie down beside water. You could feel the kick of a gun at your shoulder, and smell the blue smoke. You could hear elephants bruising the brush with their stumpy feet. Jesus!—to get out of this maelstrom of humanity gone insane with confinement—to get away from the expression of one's own face—from the dishonesty of one's own motives—leave it all to Joe the green-eyed!

Delaney's forehead wrinkled into a frown. He crossed to the safe. He pulled the mortgages from his pocket and returned them to their compartment. He also returned the P.D.Q. stock. Too late to use any of that. He pulled the bonds from another pocket, examined them, frowned, looked out of the window. What good were they to anyone else? Facts. Get at the facts of these bonds. They would probably go to Conway, who was a prisoner and had no use for bonds. Phelps would pay Mr. Jencks's debt at Conway's. He could hear the feet of the elephants breaking brush. With decision he slipped the bonds back into his breast pocket. He then shoved the door of the safe, locked it, and walked swiftly from the room. Swiftly he took his hat and topcoat from the closet of his own office, told his secretary that he was going out on business, and with a very calm appearance walked from the Herd Realty Building forever.

Caroline and Diana sat opposite each other helplessly in Mr. Jencks's bedroom. It was impossible for

Diana to look at Caroline without thinking of John; without wondering how long Caroline would be fooled; and, too, without a sense of her own age, of which she was becoming conscious for the first time in her life. Men pass freely from one experience to another, but women are prisoners to themselves, and cannot rise above themselves, nor release themselves from prison by the aid of another. There is in a woman's life less speculation—a more restricted play of chance than in a man's. She is Grecian, in the sense that origins have their effects, which fulfill themselves with an absolute finality at life's close. At least that was Diana's feeling as she stared at Caroline, with Mr. Jencks prostrate on the bed, and Joe somewhere out in the city, destroying them.

Caroline, with her eyes fixed on her father's unmuscled hand, was not thinking this, but was exploring the future. Joe had done an incredible thing—her sensation was that he had put a dagger into her father on the bed. This action of his must have some effect on her life, but she could not decide what it would be. Joe would be banned, perhaps, as Sophia Cox had been banned; or else she could choose Joe, and leave her father, exhausted, in Diana's care. She scrutinized her stepmother, and for the first time it came over her to wonder why Diana had married the man whom Joe had stabbed. The past was very mysterious, with everyone's decisions and desires hidden away in it. She hitched her shoulder. At some time in the future this day would be in the past, its decisions buried, so that no one born after this day would ever understand it.

Mr. Jencks had revived sufficiently to speak to John over the telephone and give him the combination of the safe, but then had collapsed again. He had vomited blood and the doctor said an operation on his ulcer would be necessary. He was a helpless, a disquieting figure, lying on the bed with his round chin in the air. Very ugly, Caroline felt, and she felt that all humans are ugly in the same way; and the thought of having lived with John revolted her. Somehow, faced with the present situation, waiting for whatever news fate might develop for her, her actions of the past months seemed like those of a schoolgirl. She began wondering about the future again. What would be her attitude toward John? How could you have him around in the house?

There was a tap on the door.

"Yes?" Diana said.

Jerome opened the door softly. "Eh. Mr. Phelps is downstairs, madam."

"Show him up!" Mr. Jencks cried in a frightful voice, sitting upright in the bed. He had apparently not been asleep. Diana and Caroline tried to quiet him. He insisted on seeing Phelps.

"Very well," Diana said to Jerome. "You may bring him in here."

Jerome vanished.

"I don't want you to talk business, dear," Diana said.

Mr. Jencks mumbled something that Caroline could not understand. Presently Mr. Phelps walked into the room.

"Ah—eh—how do you do Mrs. Jencks? And Caro-

line. There you are at last, Willard. I've been to your office trying to catch you. This is too bad, Willard." He took Mr. Jencks's hand. "I hope you'll feel better shortly."

"Eh, yes. Yes. I feel better already Charlton." Mr. Jencks uttered something between a groan and a sigh. "A terrible market, I understand."

"Yes. Terrifying." Mr. Phelps sat down in a chair beside the bed.

"My stomach gave out," Mr. Jencks said. He paused. "Charlton, I must have credit at once."

"Oh—ah. Well now, I suppose I could arrange for a little, Willard."

"I need a lot. There's been some misunderstanding about the condition of People's Development and they're driving it down. I'm pinched, I admit, but John just called up a few minutes ago and said that my broker is holding. John has got some temporary security to put up—a few mortgages—pending further credit from you. You've got to rush it, Charlton. Conway said——"

"Eh Mr. Jencks. Pardon me if I advise you——"

"No sir! I'm going into the market to support People's!" Mr. Jencks cried, raising himself on his elbow excitedly. "Why it's my life, Charlton! My heart! I can't lie here and watch a crowd of ragamuffins drive it into the gutter. And all the friends who have trusted in my judgment and my integrity! I'm going to buy People's! I'm going to buy all this afternoon. I'll create a virtual corner. We won't let the shorts borrow on anything we own. Damn it, we'll take it out of the market and squeeze 'em. And

when it closes, sir, that stock will be within striking distance—I say within *striking* distance of its normal price!" He pounded the bed with his fist.

"Willard!" Diana objected, "if you can't keep calm I'm going to send Mr. Phelps away."

"You must let me see this through, my dear!" Mr. Jencks gasped. "If I can't save People's from disgrace I shall—I might as well die." He fell back on to the pillow.

"Nonsense Willard," Diana said.

"I'm afraid, Mrs. Jencks," Phelps said, "that we'd better talk this out. I think it will do Willard good in the end to get this—settled."

"It's absolutely necessary!" Mr. Jencks cried, raising himself again. "Please don't interrupt us again, Diana."

Mrs. Jencks looked down at the floor.

"Now Willard," Mr. Phelps said, "I was about to advise you this morning of my latest action in regard to People's Development. I decided after much investigation that the stock is not very sound——"

"Why it's perfectly sound! You don't know what you're talking about, Charlton. This drive on it is all tommyrot, organized by a ragamuffin—an—an utter financial bum!"

"Just a moment please." Mr. Phelps raised a manicured hand. "I sold the estate's holdings in People's Development this morning."

"This morn—wa——"

"I received a very fine price for it."

"But—the market dropped."

"I sold it outside the market."

"Wa—you had no right to do that!"

"I beg your pardon, Willard, I had a duty to do so. You forget that you are not the only beneficiary——"

"But it's a valuable property! My dear man you don't know what you've done! I had such plans for People's Development! Do you hear? An immense and magnificent project in the interests of the city. Why, it was Mr. Herd's favorite stock! Why, you can be sued for this, sir!"

"Kindly calm yourself, Willard. I may say that, in my opinion, I held on to People's too long; I did so for your sake, because I realized that you had plans to—eh—develop the corporation. But it is my duty to protect the estate, and although People's Development may have been sound during Mr. Herd's lifetime, I don't believe it is so any longer. Since I sold the stock at yesterday's close——"

"Wa—then——"

"—and since it doesn't seem likely to have a rise to-day, or at any other time in the near future, it would be useless on your part, sir, to sue me or anyone else. Any court would uphold my action. Indeed, any court would commend my action."

"Yesterday's close?" Mr. Jencks said.

"At thirty-nine. Yes."

"But! Who did you sell it to, may I ask?"

"A man named Madison van Duyn bought it half an hour ago."

Mr. Jencks collapsed on the bed again. The National Garden Foods man. And why should Van Duyn be so interested in P.D.Q. as to purchase a hundred and ten thousand shares of it at a price far above

to-day's market? This could have only one explanation: Van Duyn knew about the boulevard and wanted it. Could Packer have told him? Why should Packer tell him? It was done now. It was finished. The control was lost, the centralization, the power. Mr. Jencks had bought the boulevard, another man would inherit the organization. How utterly tragic. It was Charlton's fault. Mr. Jencks's face was tragic as he lifted it.

"Did this man threaten you?"

"Why no."

"He didn't predict that the stock would go down to-day?"

"Yes. He did that."

"So you sold the stock on a threat! That's what you did! He threatened you, sir!"

"Willard!" Diana cried.

"I say sir——"

"You don't know what you're talking about," Mr. Phelps almost shouted, losing his reserve for a moment. "You're distracted, Willard. Van Duyn told me People's would probably drop to-day. That isn't a threat, that's a prediction. I happened to agree with him, and I was very fortunate—*you* were very fortunate in this unusual offer of his. The fact that he wants control of People's is upsetting to you, no doubt. I can't help that. The law doesn't require me to control People's Development. The law requires that I protect you. Now I hope that's clear. If you want my opinion, Van Duyn will get control of People's to-day, if he hasn't already got it."

"But we could buy it all in, Charlton, at a lower

price! I tell you I want money! I want money! Money!"

"Willard," Diana said.

"It's simply out of the question, Willard. You remember, I told you I wanted to sell the stock three months ago. I didn't trust it, and it isn't the kind of thing that an executor is supposed to hold, on his own motion. I held it because you asked me to hold it, to preserve your control. Obviously, in the last few weeks, you have been virtually losing control. I was afraid to sell so many shares, and Van Duyn's offer has been a godsend to all of us.

"Of course, if you want a small loan for personal reasons, say one or two hundred thousand, I would be glad to see that the bank gives it to you," Mr. Phelps said. "But anything for the purposes of speculation is absolutely out of the question."

Mr. Jencks seemed unable to speak.

"Having sold People's at a good price," Mr. Phelps said, "you can't think it logical of me to advance you several million dollars for the acquisition of what I have so thankfully got rid of."

"But at a lower price, Charlton——"

"No doubt. But the proposition is entirely speculative and I refuse to allow you to become committed to it. You are too distracted and too ill for me to entrust any of the estate to you to-day. Believe me, Willard, though you are personally wiped out now, you will thank me later when you receive the value of Mr. Herd's bequest to you in full. I am doing my very best, in these most difficult times, to preserve that value."

Caroline said suddenly: "Dad, I think Mr. Phelps is right." She paused, while everyone turned to look at her. "If you use up all your money to buy People's now, you won't have anything in the future. I'm *sure* Dad that they're going to take People's away from you."

"Who?" Mr. Jencks sat up again. "Who's 'they'?"

Blood rushed to Caroline's head and heated her cheeks. "I mean—Joe," she said.

Her mother stirred and uttered some sort of exclamation.

"I don't know why," Caroline said, "but I have a feeling that Joe won't give up. It's very definite, the way I feel. I feel as if he were just waiting to see how you're going to act. The more money you put in the more he'll take away."

In that moment she knew that she had met Joe's mind, and she was proud of having done so. Mr. Phelps regarded her seriously, then approvingly. Mr. Jencks lay back again on the bed.

The day passed. Caroline had to leave the house because Diana made her so nervous. There was something in Diana's stare that made her want to declare that she had broken away from John Delaney. Why was this? Caroline went out for a walk in Central Park.

She remembered her childhood here. She could see herself on roller skates, playing tag. The buildings had grown taller since then. She had grown taller also. She had lived with a man. That was almost incredible, it changed her so radically. She tried to imagine herself imagining this on roller skates so

many years ago, and saw how inconceivable it would have been, in the conventional dream of one man—and a not very tactual man—forever. Did there exist things as incredible to her now as that would have been to her then? The question broke itself up into fragments. Her future also seemed broken and fragmentary. She had no future at this moment. The sensation made her sick and made her desire some sort of action. Anything. She decided to go up to the apartment that she and John had lived in. It would produce a reaction of some sort, it would knock some sort of an idea into her head. She had not been there since John had struck Joe that night in the drawing room. Had John expected to gain power over her by that blow? She doubted if women are as crude, sexually, as men like to believe. The incident had affected her deeply enough, but in the opposite way from that which John had intended. She did not wish to see John any more. There was something beneath the surface of her mind, unsettling her mind, which she kept thrusting down under the surface.

She had told John to meet her here this afternoon at five, intending to have a final talk with him and send him away from her. It was now only four, and in view of the hectic events of the day she scarcely expected him to arrive at all. No matter. Whatever she had to say to him would keep for years, if necessary. She had learned so much. She slipped her key into the lock, turned it, and opened the door. She walked through the foyer and into the living room, upon the threshold of which she stopped in surprise; for there was John, leaning over, with his hat in his hand, hav-

ing apparently just picked it up from the sofa with a view toward departure. He was quite as surprised as she, and there was also something in his position, in his face, in the general atmosphere of the room, that made Caroline uneasy. What was he doing here with the stockmarket crashing to pieces around him? It was an effort to control herself and walk nonchalantly into the room.

"Ah," he said. "I had not expected the pleasure."

Caroline tossed her head and advanced, drawing off her gloves. "I hadn't intended it to be a pleasure especially."

"I see. You must have forgotten everything I've told you."

"Yes?"

"It's a pleasure just to look at you, Caroline."

"That sounds natural," she said, by no means kindly.

He advanced to help her take off her coat.

"Especially since it isn't quite honest," she said.

Reddening, he folded her coat across the back of a chair. When he turned she had already lighted a cigarette and was circled with smoke. She sat down, gathering her legs under her as usual. "What happened?" she asked.

He explained the events of the day.

When he was finished she said, "What are you going to do now?"

"Me?"

"Yes."

"Well, to-night I'm going out to Milwaukee to scare up some capital I've got out there."

"Milwaukee!"

"Yes. I can raise capital there."

Caroline studied his face and then looked down at her fingers on the arm of the chair. She strummed her fingers.

"How is Willard?" Delaney asked.

"The doctor wants to operate to-morrow. It was a terrible shock."

"Yes. I should say so."

Caroline arose restlessly. The man was charming —she could see clearly why she had fallen in love (or whatever it was) with him. Every one of his gestures affected her. She liked his intelligence, his understanding of the feminine, which was like the arm of an experienced dancer around her waist. Joe was not like that at all. Joe had no manners. Caroline stood at the hearth, staring down at the ashes, tapping her foot. She felt John's eyes on her. He knew what she was going to say—no woman could ever fool him. Men could fool him, though. Joe had outwitted him.

She turned, with a final tap of her foot, and with her fingers linked behind her said, "It's all over, John. I've had enough."

During the last few moments, slouched in his chair, he had found himself surprisingly jealous of Herd. "Are you putting the skids under me?" he asked.

"Yes," she said. "Just that."

"Um. I might have known it."

She said, quite impersonally, "That night you hit Joe, I knew."

"Knew what?"

"That I loved Joe."

His face became tense. He could find nothing to say.

"It was the wrong cue, John," Caroline said.

"You didn't like to see poor little Joe hurt, I suppose."

"I don't think the strong-arm stuff gets by so well as they say it does," she said. Then she looked at him keenly. "It wasn't a question of who got hurt, you see. There was something in the way you did it that told me that there was something—between you and Joe—that neither of you—but especially that you didn't want me to know. In other words, you had lied to me up here, just half an hour earlier. You remember what I said then?"

"You asked me a lot of silly questions."

"Perhaps." She tapped her foot again, and the keen expression sharpened her mouth. "But I also said I wouldn't stand for a lie."

"If that's your attitude about lies you're going to have a tough time of it in this world, my dear."

"I don't care about most lies. It was this particular lie. This particular lie has had some effect on my whole life. I don't know what it is, but I warned you, John."

"Yes."

She lifted her shoulders. "So you see," she said. "I'm grateful to you, of course."

"Why?"

"Why? Well, you taught me to love——"

He looked at her bitterly.

"And you showed me that I love Joe."

He shifted violently in his chair and reached for a cigarette at the table. "That was very kind of me, I'm sure," he said. The cigarette box on the table was empty.

"Yes," she said. "The trouble with you is that I don't trust you." She stared at him.

He started to rise, and then checked himself. What was the use of objecting to this? There was much stoicism in the character of John Delaney; and besides, the situation was not at all unusual. He knew he had lost Caroline, and he knew that it was time to lose her. He himself shrugged. "As you wish," he said.

Caroline continued to study him, and then turned abruptly toward the bedroom. "Please wait a minute," she said. It was in her mind to return some jewels that he had given her—a sapphire bracelet and an unusual string of pearls. There was no question of keeping the pearls, yet they were extraordinarily beautiful and she had looked forward to wearing them after her marriage. She remembered without shame one evening when she had worn nothing but these for him. They had shimmered on her darker breast, and the pleasure of them had been real; but now she hurried to get them, that the incident might become a memory. She was hunting for the bracelet. She opened its usual drawer with no result; another drawer; another. She was in the habit of leaving it carelessly on the dressing table. Could the maid have taken it? Caroline had not been in the apartment for a long time and almost anything might have happened. A little frantically she sought

for the pearls. The blue Cartier box was lying in its proper drawer, and she seized it. What could have happened to the bracelet? She opened the lid of the box and stared. There were no pearls.

For a long second Caroline looked at herself in the mirror. She was sure that Edith would not have stolen the pearls. You could tell honest faces. Who then? She kept looking at herself, as if to force an idea out of her own image; and then a very strange thought came to her—terrifying, it was, because it had no connection with any kind of reality with which she was familiar. Her father and John were wiped out; John needed capital, spoke of going out to Milwaukee; he was here early; and there was that peculiar atmosphere in the sitting room, and something indefinable about John's movements. Caroline jumped to her feet, without realizing what she was doing. Her one desire was to see him. She wanted to make sure about those movements of his, and his eyes. She reached the door, and just as she appeared, Delaney, facing the door in his chair, was reaching into the right-hand pocket of his coat. His arm stopped and became fixed. Their eyes met and vibrated. Delaney's arm resumed its motion and presently drew from his pocket a package of cigarettes. Yet there was something in the motion of the arm that told the full story. (He could see the idea spreading, like horror, across her face; until it affected her so strongly that she choked, and her hand went to her throat.) Controlling herself, she watched him choose a cigarette and tap it on the back of his hand. It seemed impossible to endure the shock of his personality any longer, and at the same

time she did not want to talk about this. She was so sick of herself that she did not want to say anything. She whirled on the ball of her foot, reached over to the dressing table, snatched the empty blue box, and then faced him again. In this brief moment she had composed her features into an expression of sarcasm. She now advanced rather suavely through the door, holding the box in her hand. She crossed to the end of the sofa where Delaney had placed his hat. She picked up the hat and carried it over to him. "Here, John," she said, holding it out to him. "It's time to ring down the curtain."

He looked at her and then he stared at the blue box.

"Please get up," she said. "I want to be alone a little while."

He arose. He took his hat from her, and had the sensation of being sent home from school. She was smiling. When she spoke her voice bit into him like acid.

"I think you had better take back these pearls," she said, holding out the empty box. "I loved them. But of course I couldn't wear them any more."

Delaney swallowed, then flushed with anger. She had a sharp tongue, this girl. He took the box and shoved it into his pocket. This was better than an argument.

"I couldn't find the bracelet," Caroline said, "but if I do I'll send it to you. It wasn't worth much any way," she said bitterly.

He stared at her a moment with his fingers on his chin. Damn these women! His eyes clashed with hers

in a brief moment of hate. Then he turned on his heel, swung through the foyer, and closed the front door.

Caroline sat alone in the big wing chair, smoking one cigarette after another, with her legs bunched up under her. For two hours after John had left she scarcely moved. It grew so dark that nothing was to be seen in the room but the reddened tip of her cigarette and the hulks of furniture. She watched the wall of the building opposite her disappear, and light burst from the windows of bedrooms, where people were dressing for dinner behind blinds. The enmillioned similarity of these windows oppressed her, and nevertheless she was glad to be watching them from this chair. For John Delaney was already a memory here. He had passed out of her life definitely. She felt as if she had won her domain, her tiny ledge on the side of a steel building, from John; and found herself wondering, unfairly no doubt, how many women in the apartments opposite her had won ledges from men whom they had pretended to love.

Away from the bitterness of her family she wanted to think about Joe; for the family had righteously turned against Joe and could conceive of him as nothing less than a demon, a monstrosity of nature, capable of the most Borgian passions. Nevertheless, Caroline had heard the same things said about her mother, Sophia Cox, and she now wondered whether Mr. Jencks and Diana were not too easily inclined to call certain characters monstrous. When she had gone to see her mother for the first time, four years ago, she had felt that she was visiting some secret,

though fascinating, altar of evil. But she had found no evil. She had found a most charming, if baffling, woman, whom she visited secretly several times that year. Curiosity had stirred her then, and an excited desire to examine this lovely refutation of all the philosophy that Mr. Jencks had taught her. No doubt Sophia Cox had done wrong in her life, but Caroline knew that she was not evil. Had Sophia not run away to Paris, Caroline would certainly have consulted her before undertaking to live with John. But now she decided that she would go no further in life without telling Sophia where she was going. And there came over her a strong resentment against Mr. Jencks and Diana for having prejudiced her against her mother, and against Joe too. It seemed to her that Sophia and Joe were the only persons she cared about at all, and she even wondered if they were not the only persons who really cared about her. The thought of each of them was warm, and the thought of any other person in the world, in this forsaken moment, was cold.

She shifted in her seat and scrunched a cigarette into the ash tray. Had she not all her life been surrounded by passions which, even yet, she was scarcely able to recognize? She herself was impersonal; she felt herself to be without passions—modern she would have called it, cold. But Sophia Cox was passionate. You could tell by looking at Sophia's dark eyes that she lived a life of alternating sorrow and ecstasy, and only with difficulty used her mind. John Delaney, with the string of pearls in his pocket, was the same way; Joe, the phlegmatic, was passionate in

his hate, and in his secret love of his own relentlessness. There was her own father, who had sold his soul to a boulevard, gathering up his broken body and shouting at Grandfather's executor: "I need money! I need money! Money!" That was so unreasonable. She had just told John that she loved Joe, but she was not really so sure about this, because she thought she was too cold in the contemplation of it; just as she had coldly and deliberately taken John for a lover. Well, she liked to be that way. Joe liked her that way. Joe could be impersonal himself—sometimes. She smiled. She wanted to see his funny head, the forehead that reminded you of a muskrat, the short brown hair. She wanted to watch his green eyes lifting their lazy veils while a few laconic words were being spoken. He left you so much to understand without words that it was fun to talk with him. Perhaps he was the most stupid person on earth; certainly, the most imprisoned. But she had lived in the same house with him most of her life, and now she could not conceive of living without him. She had less physical desire for him than for certain other men, yet she knew that he was necessary. Delaney had been a mirage. Perhaps her mother could have foretold that. Her mother was wise. But now she had discovered it for herself anyway, and perhaps that was better; and had discovered that her decision to marry John had been no more than a defiance, and that she had never pictured their actual life in detail. She had never pictured it because it was impossible. She smiled in the darkness and put another cigarette between her lips. Where the devil was Joe keeping

himself? She had not seen him for weeks, since John struck him. She had merely felt his power, seeing her father return home night after night with tense, ashen face; feeling Joe crush the family from afar as they sat in discontented silence around the dinner table.

She crossed aimlessly to the telephone, switched on the light, and stood blinking at the instrument. She remembered Harry Gale. "Hello. Is Mr. Gale in? Oh. When do you expect him? Oh. Will you tell him please to call Porter 8970 as soon as he comes in? This is Miss Jencks. Yes. It's very important, tell him."

That was about eight o'clock. At least three hours later she was sitting there in total darkness, waiting for that bell to ring.

A little after six, while Caroline sat watching the apartment house opposite her merge itself into the dusk, a squat broad-shouldered figure stepped out of a cab on upper Park Avenue. He glanced at the lighted windows on the second floor of the house, paid his driver, and then advanced toward the grilled doorway with determination. Observing him, some imaginative neighbor might have been shocked to see the ghost of Old Man Herd returning to the house of his daughter-in-law. But this was a new generation entirely.

Quite properly, since he was no longer welcomed here, Joe pressed the doorbell with his chubby thumb and waited for the butler. He had no idea what his reception would be, but now that Uncle Will was broken, financially and physically, now that Delaney

had gone away, he felt that he was entitled to announce himself to the family as their master; not superficially, as one whom they would be bound to obey, but profoundly, so that they could never disregard him again in the planning of their lives.

The day stretched behind him like a lifetime, infinite in detail and incomprehensible. Niehlson had been acquitted about noon, the jury having stayed out only thirty-eight minutes. Van Duyn was still short of a bottomless market, and could cover Bethlehem and P.D.Q. at any time with fabulous profits. He would cover P.D.Q. in a few days at some unreasonable price below twenty, where the violence of public opinion against Jencks and Delaney was driving it; he would then announce the boulevard offer from the city and begin forcing the mutilated stock up again. He would make at least three and a half million dollars on every ten points' rise. . . .

"Hello Jerome."

"Why—oh—yes, Mr. Joe." Jerome stood in the door, thinking of some conversations he had overheard, and uncertain of how he should receive the former heir.

"Is Mrs. Jencks in?"

"Eh—yes, sir." Jerome concealed his confusion with a bow, and stepped backward.

"Tell her I'd like to see her," Joe said. "I'd like to see Mr. Jencks too."

"Yes, sir. Will you wait here, sir?"

"No, I'll go up to the library. Is Miss Jencks in?"

"No sir, Miss Jencks is not in."

"Hunh." He climbed the stairs, Jerome following

him. He had expected to find Caroline. Where else would she be, on the day of her father's collapse? As he entered the library the thought crossed his mind that she might have left town with Delaney. But Mac, the detective, had not mentioned any woman with Delaney. What the devil? She was probably out seeing some girl friend, talking her head off. Women talk so much. He began pacing the room in which Grandfather had disinherited him and had thrown him that challenge about getting to work. He had taken up the challenge, but in his own fashion, not in accordance with Grandfather's rules, nor with any other rules. He disliked rules as much as he disliked women. Grandfather had been the same way—an old pirate who would get the better of you every time if you gave him a chance. And that was the only way of life that Joe could understand.

He was staring down at the fireplace, with his hands behind his back, when he heard a step at the door. He turned swiftly, with his shoulders hunched forward, to find Diana. She wore a blue tea gown, and on her face as she stared at him there was a queer mixture of outrage and timidity—confronted by her own son, the effects of whose temperament she had been suffering all day. There were two contrasting lights in her gray eyes; the cold elusiveness which Joe knew as characteristic of her, and a warm white directness, like waves breaking on a beach in summer, which Diana had shown only to Frank Herd, when she was young, and to John Delaney, when she was not afraid of him.

"'Lo Mother."

The sound of his voice recalled all the years since Frank's suicide; the warm light disappeared and her face grew rigid. "You certainly are shameless, Joe, coming here—after everything else."

"Never have any shame," he said.

"No," she said, a little more gently, "you never do."

Diana needed a rather heavy masculine hand; Frank Herd's had been too gentle, and its action had always been thwarted by blind love. His suicide had merely frightened her, and had offered her no means of control. John Delaney had never mastered her—had never even desired to master her. Willard Jencks was less clever and less competent than she. Only Grandfather, the tyrant, could call out the best in her nature, but he had taken pleasure in indulging her at the same time. Diana's cold superficiality, therefore, had grown out of the inadequacy of the men around her, as a substitute for what they should have given her; almost as if her organism were trying to supply itself with a mate. She could feel this development taking place within her year after year. It had been intensified by Joe's silent oppressive disapproval.

But after that interview with Joe in his bedroom, the evening that Delaney struck him, Diana had felt a mysterious force in her life—like the force which transforms mountains in spring. Joe's cruelty, Joe's inalterability had caused an awakening, which she had recognized, if she had not yet identified it. It was almost as if she were in love again.

"You better come in and sit down," Joe said, beginning to pace. "I got some things to talk over."

She hesitated a moment, feeling the spring so distinctly that she could almost connect it with Joe, she could almost attribute it to Joe. Presently she entered the room, and crossing to an electric button, pressed it to call Jerome. She then stood near the door, waiting for Jerome, with her head bowed and her hands joined loosely in front of her. Joe paced. Neither of them spoke until the butler arrived.

"Light a fire for us, Jerome."

"Yes, madam." He drew a match from his pocket and set it to the paper under the logs.

"And see that no one interrupts us, please," Diana said.

"Yes, madam."

She sat down gracefully in an armchair beside the hearth, adjusting the skirt of her tea gown around her knees and ankles, and choosing a cigarette from a silver box. "Joe, you might stop that pacing now," she said, "and come and talk to me."

He was surprised by her mood, and deeply pleased. He crossed to the hearth and sat down opposite her. "Your Uncle Will is not well enough to see you," she said. "I haven't even told him that you're here."

"Suit yourself," Joe said. "I had some things to tell him."

"I really think he'd drive you out of the house with a gun."

Joe said nothing.

"And I couldn't blame him," she said. "It seems—criminal, Joe."

"All right," he said. "Don't let's argue."

"No," she said, leaning back in the chair. "I don't want to argue."

He realized that he was talking to a woman within the shell that he had always called his mother—the tortoise shell of an exact French face and eyes that feared him: but he had the impression that her present attitude was no more than a mood; he had no confidence in its permanence.

"I came around here," he said, "to tell you that I'm through. I got everything I wanted to-day. I'm not goin' t' do any more damage than I have."

Diana said, a little sarcastically, "I suppose we should be grateful to you?"

"Yeah," Joe said, "I think you should."

"Why?"

"Because I got rid of him," he said after a short silence. "He's gone."

"Who?"

"Who do you s'pose?"

"Oh." She dropped her eyes hurriedly. Everything became clear in such a fraction of time that she was frightened at herself. It took her some moments to recover her composure. The fire crackled between them.

Presently Joe said, "He's left the country."

Diana looked up at him timidly. "Where—has he gone, Joe?"

"Do you really want to know?"

Again she dropped her eyes. Her heart seemed like a church on Easter morning. She felt released, and so unexpectedly that it was almost a pain to be released.

Her joy was sharp, as in certain symphonic climaxes pleasure can scarcely be distinguished from pain. Those actions of Joe's, which she had thought so tyrranous and cruel, now seemed gentle and benevolent. He had stretched out his hand to her and led her from hell. There was faith between them, as there should be between a mother and her son. They were loyal to each other. She had almost been destroyed. He had not permitted her to be destroyed. He had rescued her from a poisoner. No less than that. No less.

When she looked up at him again there were tears in her eyes. "No," she said. "I don't want to know." She was trying to say something more but her lips would not be controlled. Tears were on her cheeks but she was not crying. At length she said with difficulty:

"Th-thank you, Joe."

"'T's all right," he said, embarrassed. He looked down at the floor. "I hated him worse'n you did," he said presently.

"Have you got a handkerchief, dear?"

He pulled one from the breast pocket of his coat, leaned over with a queer hurried gesture, and shook it at her.

"Thanks," she said. She touched it to her cheeks. "I didn't hate him exactly," she said.

"You should've."

"Why?" She looked at him steadily, the light in her eyes clear and direct. "Why should I hate him for wanting to make love to me? It wasn't his fault. It never is a man's fault, Joe. Do you understand that?"

He kept his eyes on the carpet. "Yeah," he said.

"I was powerless," she said, "and that's why he could do so much damage."

Joe looked at her swiftly.

"He had timed me—I think that's the word. It all seems very clear now. You have made it very clear, dear." She paused to watch the muscles of his jaws working. "Although for many years you were no help at all."

Joe nodded, thinking. He himself was very much surprised. This kind of interview was the last thing he had expected when he stepped up to the grilled door on Park Avenue.

"I didn't trust you, Joe—you've never made me trust you before. And I didn't trust John. And I didn't trust myself. I see now, now that John has gone, I can trust—everybody." Her eyes filled with tears again. "That's why I'm so happy," she said; and then was able to control her voice no longer. She covered her face with his handkerchief. She did not cry, but he could hear her breath taken in quick unexpected gasps, as if happiness were an emotion that could scarcely be endured.

"I guess maybe we can start all over again," Joe said after a while.

Diana looked up and smiled. She dried her eyes and re-settled herself in her chair. "Yes," she said. "I'll try to." She studied him. "What are you going to do about your Uncle Will?"

"Nothin' for me t' do," he said. "Phelps'll take care of him. You aren't goin' t' be exactly poor when he gets Grandfather's money."

"No," she said, still studying him. "You're not going to try to get that money, Joe?"

"No. What for?"

"Why, I don't know. You might consider it yours."

"How should I consider it mine when Grandfather left it to Uncle Will?"

He was always logical, Diana reflected, no matter what else one could say of him. He had a crude logic —very difficult to understand. She said, "Yes, that's true." But she could not help thinking that it would be wise to give him some of Grandfather's money, to prevent any explosion in the future.

He saw the thought in her eyes. "Understand," he said firmly, "nothin' I've done has been on account of Grandfather's money. When he disinherited me I told him to can it——"

"Joe!"

"And I meant what I said. The thing that drove me crazy in this house was you," he said.

"Yes, Joe."

"I don't need money."

"No dear, of course not. But what are you going to do? Where are you going to live?"

"I'm goin' t' live in the Sixteenth Street house," he said. "Maybe I'll get some sort of a job with Van Duyn. He and I understand each other pretty good. Cal and I won't need much——"

"You and Caroline!"

"Yeah," he said. "I'm goin' t' marry Cal. Always did intend to."

"My goodness, Joe!"

"What's th' matter with that idea?"

"It took you such a long *while*," Diana said.

Joe took dinner at Tarne's house with Van Duyn, Gale, and Claypoole. Uncle David, it seemed, was frantic at the decline which his nephew had caused in Bethlehem, and definite steps would have to be taken to placate him. Since Keystone had fallen off in sympathy with Bethlehem, it would be difficult to open negotiations with the directors of that road again. But Van Duyn decided to try it. He said he could negotiate a new merger within a year's time. This decision was to be presented to Uncle David the next morning on a silver platter. Claypoole talked of sailing for Europe, nevertheless. They worked over figures until eleven o'clock, when Harry Gale insisted on going home to bed.

On the way to his hotel Joe dropped in to see the Niehlsons. He wanted to give Herman some money and send him off to Bermuda. It was after midnight when he broke away from the enthusiastic embrace of Mrs. Niehlson, reached his hotel on Sixth Avenue, and shuffled down the disreputable, uncarpeted hall. He inserted a key into the battered, varnished door, and pushed his way into the hot room. He groped for the light; but having turned it on there was nothing for it to illuminate but an iron bed, once painted white; a domestic brown carpet, worn threadbare along the bedside; a varnished rocker and straight-backed chair; a varnished bureau, and a table whose china ash tray was only half cleaned. He stood surveying this retreat with his head thrust

forward and a look of exhaustion in his eyes. His mouth was grim and the fingers of one hand twitched as they hung at his side.

He had just flung his coat on to the rocking chair and laid violent hands on his necktie when the telephone beside his bed rang so loudly that he started. He watched it ringing. Let it go? Perhaps Van had some question to ask. Van was not the man to put off asking questions until a convenient hour. All right. He had got Van into this P.D.Q., he had better see him through it. He picked up the telephone and growled a greeting.

"There's a Mr. Gale down here," the hotel operator said.

"Gale? Harry Gale?"

"That's right."

"Hunh. What the hell's he want? Show him up."

He paced the room. An hour ago Harry had left Tarne's on his way to bed. Perhaps he was drunk. He wasn't going to stand for any of Harry's flip. There was a soft knock on the door.

"Come in." He looked up only after the door was opened. There was Caroline, in blue. She was dressed for the afternoon and wore a hat. "Well, for crysake," he muttered, staring.

"Can I come in?"

Since he said nothing she came in anyway, closing the door behind her. Presently Joe grunted and laughed. "Glad to see you," he said. "Sit on the bed."

"You flatter it," Caroline said, sitting on it nevertheless and pulling off her gloves. The extreme style

of her street suit in these shabby surroundings struck him as incongruous, and pleasant.

"Harry tell you where I was?" he asked.

"Yes," she said. "He brought me around here."

"Harry's always buttin' in on other people's affairs."

"May I take off my hat?"

"Sure. Take off anything you like."

She made a stage smile at him, lifted her hat from her head with some difficulty, and shook out her bobbed hair.

"Why don't you let your hair grow long?" Joe said.

"Would you like it?"

"Hunh." He turned away, as if embarrassed by his own feeling, or perhaps by her feeling. Turning back to her, he said: "You realize, I s'pose that maybe the Dick'll drop in on us."

"Oh, that's all right," she said. "I'm not going to stay long." She grew serious. "I wanted to tell you about Dad," she said.

"How is he?"

"You heard that he collapsed?"

"Yeah, I heard somethin' about it."

She looked at him a moment, trying to discover whether he was really as hard as he pretended to be. "You oughtn't to have done that," she said levelly.

Joe said nothing.

"Dad's so gentle," she said. "He's never intentionally hurt you, Joe. I should think—hell, I can't conceive of anyone hurting him in cold blood. It's like murder."

"Did you come 'way over here to tell me this?"

"I guess so." She dropped her eyes.

"Don't you think I got enough sense t' see it for myself? Do I look happy? Do I look 's if I were wavin' any American flags?"

"You've been inconceivably destructive," she said. "You've ruined Dad's life. I—I can't find words. I can't believe it, Joe."

He was annoyed, but said nothing.

Caroline stared at him. "What right did you have to destroy a perfectly innocent——"

"Innocent! Oh hell. Listen Cal, I'm worn out by this. My nerves are all in pieces, 'n' I'm not goin' t' stand here and be lectured. If this is all you came up t' see me 'bout you better go 'way and think it over. I had just one reason for doin' what I did, and you know it already. You were too damned stubborn, and by th' looks of it you still are."

"But why ruin Dad?"

"Who else?"

She continued to stare.

"It don't seem 's if I'd knocked anythin' into your head yet. If I haven't, I still got some more things I could do."

"You talk like a child."

"Maybe."

"So far as I can see you've absolutely no remorse."

"Who wants remorse? I did what I wanted t' do and I'm not ashamed of m'self. I don't see where you get this line. Uncle Will's got forty million or so comin' to him. If you call that bein' broke you got an exaggerated idear of poverty."

Caroline said nothing.

"Unless," Joe said, "he gets more outa Phelps and tries t' fight me with it." He began pacing. "He'll lose everythin' then."

"He won't do that," Caroline said.

"What makes you think so?"

"Because I told him that if he did you'd take that away from him too."

Joe stood looking at her a moment, and then he said, "That's good, Cal." And this was as much flattery as a girl could ever expect from him. He paced again, then stopped. "You might answer me one question."

"What's that?"

"You know what."

"Oh. Well, he's gone out to Milwaukee," she said.

Joe laughed outright. "Milwaukee! That's a good one."

"He said he was going there."

"Did you give him your blessing?"

"No."

"It's all over?"

"Yes." Their eyes were meeting intensely.

"Milwaukee is good," Joe said presently. "Do you know where he's gone?"

"No."

"He's on the *Mauretania*." Joe pulled out his watch. "Guess he's pretty well out to sea now." He began pacing again.

Caroline paled. She did not really care where Delaney went, but his flight, coupled with the episode of the pearls, made her feel that she had recently

been talking—living—with a first-rate crook. "*Mauretania!*" she said. "It's impossible."

"I've been trailin' him all day," Joe said. "He left th' office, 'bout noon and spent th' day fixin' his passport. Then he spent 'bout an hour uptown somewheres and then he took his bags from his apartment and drove like hell for th' *Mauretania*."

Caroline was amazed. "You had him followed by detectives?"

"Yeah."

"And he isn't going to Milwaukee?"

"Does the *Mauretania* go to Milwaukee?"

"Don't be rude, Joe. This will reflect terribly on Dad."

"I told you I still had some tricks."

Caroline was hurt and became angry. For a moment she was afraid that Joe's detectives knew about her apartment with John. Perhaps not; but the thought that they could have known about it made her angry. She stood up and faced him. "I think you're the most outrageous person I've ever heard of! You've got no feeling whatever for anybody. You're unnatural! You're ghastly!" After staring into his eyes a moment, she turned her back.

"What's 'ghastly' mean?"

"*Shut* up!" she cried, stamping her foot and facing him again. "If you say another word like that I'll slap you!"

Joe shrugged.

"I came around here to tell you a lot of things I've discovered!" she cried. "I wanted to talk things over with you. All I get is insolence and total abso-

lute blindness that's simply unendurable. I'm not going to endure it any longer, do you understand that? You've got to do something to help me for once in your life. Joe! You've got to be decent to my father and your mother—I don't give a damn how much you hate them! Or else I'll never speak to you again. I'll run you out of town, the way you said you'd run John out." She broke down crying. "The way you did run him out," she said.

If he thought he was going to be called upon to soothe her, however, he was quite mistaken. With one of her sudden turns Caroline looked up at him. Since he found nothing to say, she straightened herself, said "Good-night!" and then turned toward the door.

Joe reached out and grabbed her arm. "Now wait a minute," he said. "I got a few things t' say m'self. They're on m' mind and I got a right to them. Sit down."

She collapsed, rather than sat, on to the bed. She found herself exhausted.

"I hadn't expected t' tell you what I'm goin' t' tell you," Joe said. "But since you're carryin' on this way I might 's well make a day of it." He paused for words, walking up and down with his eyes on the floor. "It all began last winter. There was somethin' in your eye one night, when we were eatin' in the pantry. I kinda felt you were gettin' sick of th' whole works. I should of done somethin' about it, but I was too damned lazy." He stopped speaking for another few moments. "I guess I half expected you t' take up with some slicker, and it

wouldn't have done you any harm 's far 's I could see. But when I learned it was Delaney"—he stopped pacing—"Good God! You hadn't moved an inch. You hadn't thrown anythin' over at all. You were in deeper. You'd picked up a guy that had pumped everythin' he could out of th' Herd family——"

"Joe!"

"Well?"

"What was it that John did to you?"

He was facing her with his legs apart and his hands behind his back. After studying her a moment, he turned, threw his coat from the rocking chair, and drew the chair close to the bed. Straddling it backward, he sat down facing Caroline. The veils over his eyes lifted, so that she felt closer to him than she ever had been before.

"I guess I better tell you that I saw Mother this afternoon," he said. "I spent 'bout an hour with her, and she and I got to know each other, kind of. She understands what I did and why I did it. She's glad I did it."

Caroline's eyes grew wide.

"Mother wouldn't want me t' tell you what I'm goin' t' tell you, but it seems t' me you've got a right t' know. You and she'll have to work it out between you." He paused. He caught a breath and continued it with a little grunt, as if his thought were a difficult one. "When I was a kid," he said simply, "Mother was John Delaney's mistress."

"Oh!"

Joe proceeded relentlessly. "Maybe not his mistress exactly, but anyway they lived t'gether while

my father was away in th' war. And when he came back he and I—discovered 'em. I was just a kid and didn't know what I was hollerin' about and I gave her away—and that night, when I gave her away, Dad climbed up to th' cliff of the Chieftain and shot himself."

Caroline sat staring at him with her hand on her cheek, her lips parted. His revelation explained so many of the family's conflicts that she could not immediately grasp the full significance of it. Her first thought was more personal—a kind of physical shame that John had ever touched her, to Diana's knowledge and to Joe's. The feeling became intense enough to frighten her, so that her forehead clouded and she breathed quickly. How unendurable! Her attempt to break away from the family, through John, seemed now so pathetic that it disgusted her. She stared at Joe distractedly.

"There's been a ghost in our house ever since," Joe was saying, using the very words that Caroline had used. "My father's been in th' house all th' time. Mother 'n' I've seen him, kind of between us. It made her afraid of me and it made me hate her, because through her I killed Dad. When I was a kid I used t' consider m'self a murderer. I used t' read th' murder stories in th' papers every day, an' grin, because I thought I belonged to 'em. I always took th' murderer's side, 'n' always hated th' jury and th' prosecutor. I felt all of that when I was gettin' Herman Niehlson out of his trouble, and that night, when Uncle Will an' John started in on me 'bout th' trial, I pretty near went crazy. I got all stirred up

about savin' Niehlson from th' chair, 's if I was savin' m'self. It made me do a lot more damage, maybe, than I could ever have done otherwise. Anyway, that's been th' trouble with th' family, an' that's why I hated him—Delaney I mean—so's th' thought of him touchin' you——"

He stopped, with his sentence unfinished, half embarrassed by what his words were going to imply, half frightened by the look in Caroline's eyes. As Tarne had said, he was afraid of emotions. Thus they stared at each other, until, unable to endure more, Caroline broke down convulsively, clutching the iron post of the bed with one hand and covering her eyes with the other. The moment surged over her like a tidal wave, she abandoned herself to it helplessly. When it subsided she found herself looking across fifteen years of wreckage. All her memories of those years seemed futile and lifeless. She had lived her girlhood in a kind of charnel house of human emotions. (Was it some subconscious reaction to that environment that had made Caroline so impersonal, so cold in her feelings? But she was not impersonal now—she had never felt such profound emotion in her life.) Joe arose to resume his pacing. She took her hand from her eyes. Her body swayed as she watched him cross and recross the room. All his life he had known this about his mother and John. All his life he had known futility. All his life he had nourished and exaggerated and brooded over his child-love for his father. He was an adept in destruction. No wonder he was a runt, and harsh, and entirely sufficient to himself. Perhaps the most

characteristic thing of all was that he had never told her about it, even as a child. He had kept his mouth shut in pride, in shame.

He stopped in front of her again, and Caroline sat with her hands on her lap, staring into his green eyes, unable to get this picture of his life out of her mind.

"Don't look so scared," he said.

His words were blunt, and yet so tender that they brought Caroline's blood into her cheeks, and her heart pounded. She dropped her eyes. She was glad that he was standing there. His presence was truth. She did not need to hear him speak. She did not need to hear him say that he loved her. The fact that he existed was proof that life was not altogether a mess.

Presently she whispered, "I'm not scared——"

He remained standing, his arms helpless with embarrassment, his personality emanating silent energy like a light across dark, moving water. He seemed glad that she was not scared. Caroline looked up at him, and smiled, and stretched out her hand.

THE END

There's More to Follow!

More stories of the sort you like; more, probably, by the author of this one; more than 500 titles all told by writers of world-wide reputation, in the Authors' Alphabetical List which you will find on the *reverse side* of the wrapper of this book. Look it over before you lay it aside. There are books here you are sure to want—some, possibly, that you have *always* wanted.

It is a *selected* list; every book in it has achieved a certain measure of *success*.

The Grosset & Dunlap list is not only the greatest Index of Good Fiction available, it represents in addition a generally accepted Standard of Value. It will pay you to

Look on the Other Side of the Wrapper!

In case the wrapper is lost write to the publishers for a complete catalog

ROMANCES OF THE MODERN GIRL

May be had wherever books are sold. ¦ Ask for Grosset and Dunlap's List.

Here is a list of books by well known writers of romance stories for the modern girl. They are writers whose names have become famous with the publication of their stories as newspaper serials. These books are now available in the Grosset & Dunlap Edition.

MAY CHRISTIE

The High Speed Girl
Flirting Wives
The Jazz Widow
A Kiss For Corinna
Eager Love
Man Madness
Love's Ecstasy

ALMA SIOUX SCARBERRY

Make-Up
The Dimpled Racketeer
The Flat Tire
High Hat

BEATRICE BURTON

Lovejoy
The Little Yellow House
Easy
Money Love
The Hollywood Girl
Honey Lou
The Flapper Wife

ROBERT D. ANDREWS

The Stolen Husband
Three Girls Lost
One Girl Found

ROB EDEN

$20 a Week
The Lovely Liar
Step-Child
Love Blind
The Girl with Red Hair

ELENORE MEHERIN

Miss Pat
Jerry
Chickie
Chickie, A Sequel
Nora Lee
Sandy

LAURA LOU BROOKMAN

Guilty Lips
Mad Marriage
Heart Hungry
As No Woman Hath Loved
Her Love Problem
Playmate
The Heart Bandit

JANE DIXON

Miss Hard Boiled

ANNE GARDNER

Working Wives
Masquerade

GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers,* NEW YORK

BY MASTERS OF

MYSTERY STORY WRITING

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset and Dunlap's list

S. S. VAN DINE

The "Canary" Murder Case
The Greene Murder Case
The Bishop Murder Case

AGATHA CHRISTIE

The Mysterious Mr. Quin
Partners in Crime
The Seven Dials Mystery
The Mystery of the Blue Train
The Murder of Roger Ackroyd
The Big Four
The Mysterious Affair at Styles
The Secret Adversary

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

The Door
The Circular Staircase
The Man in Lower Ten
K. the Unknown
Two Flights Up

M. G. EBERHART

The Patient in Room 18
While the Patient Slept

J. S. FLETCHER

The Borgia Cabinet
Paradise Court
Murder in the Pallant
The Mazaroff Mystery
The Middle Temple Murder
The Cartwright Gardens Murder

DASHIELL HAMMETT

The Dain Curse
The Maltese Falcon
Red Harvest

EARL DERR BIGGERS

Charlie Chan Carries On
Black Camel
Behind That Curtain
Seven Keys to Baldpate
The House Without a Key
The Chinese Parrot
Fifty Candles

ANNE AUSTIN

The Black Pigeon
Murder Backstairs
The Avenging Parrot

EDGAR WALLACE

The Feathered Serpent
The Double

A CONAN DOYLE

Tales of Sherlock Holmes
The Hound of the Baskervilles

KAY CLEAVER STRAHAN

The Desert Moon Mystery
Footprints

GROSSET & DUNLAP, Publishers, NEW YORK

EMILIE LORING'S NOVELS

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's list.

"Refreshing"—is the word that best describes Mrs. Loring's delightful romances. There is always a fascinating plot twist and her characters are the kind of high-spirited people you'd like to meet in real life.

LIGHTED WINDOWS

The romance of a young engineer and a beautiful society girl, with the wilds of Alaska as a setting for their dramatic story.

SWIFT WATER

The story of a high-spirited, impetuous girl who fell in love with a man much against her will.

GAY COURAGE

Geoffrey Hilliard returns home after many years of aimless drifting to find himself in adventures far beyond his expectations.

A CERTAIN CROSSROAD

When Judith and Neil met at a certain crossroad neither suspected the thrilling events in store for them.

HERE COMES THE SUN

Julie Lorraine was not in love but on a quixotic impulse she married Jim Trafford to protect him from ruin by his enemies.

THE SOLITARY HORSEMAN

Few suspected the secret that was locked in the heart of the solitary horseman as he gazed out over the valley.

THE TRAIL OF CONFLICT

Stephen marries Geraldine to save his father from financial ruin. These young people struggle to find a way to happiness.

GROSSET & DUNLAP, PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

PETER B. KYNE'S NOVELS

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's List.

GOLDEN DAWN.—The story of a dual personality—of a girl who turned from high society to a life of crime in the underworld.

THE PARSON OF PANAMINT.—The story of a young parson in a wide open town, told in racy and picturesque language by Chuckawalla Bill.

JIM THE CONQUEROR.—The romance of Don Jaime Miguel Higuenes, rancher, and Roberta Antrim, red haired society girl from the East.

TIDE OF EMPIRE.—The story of a young Irishman who crossed the mountains alone into California and joined the gold rush of '49

THE THUNDER GOD.—A romance of big business, men fighting for enormous stakes and of the brilliant projects of one man, a scientist.

THEY ALSO SERVE.—The story of a cowboy's horse that served in France with the artillery.

THE UNDERSTANDING HEART.—Men said Monica Dale had the understanding heart of a woman and the soul of a gallant gentleman.

MONEY TO BURN.—The exciting adventures of Elmer Clarke with his suddenly acquired million.

THE ENCHANTED HILL.—The struggle for honor and the Enchanted Hill Ranch in the Southwest.

NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET.—A romance of California and the South Seas.

THE PRIDE OF PALOMAR.—When two men clash and the under-dog has Irish blood in his veins—a tale Kyne can tell.

CAPPY RICKS.—Cappy Ricks gave Matt Peasley the acid test because he knew it was good for his soul.

CAPPY RICKS RETIRES.—Cappy retires but the romance of the sea and business kept calling him and he comes back strong.

KINDRED OF THE DUST.—Donald McKay, son of Hector McKay, millionaire lumber king, falls in love with "Nan of the Sawdust pile."

THE VALLEY OF THE GIANTS.—The fight of the Cardigans, father and son, to hold the valley of the giants against treachery.

WEBSTER, MAN'S MAN.—The adventures of a man and woman in a Central American revolution. A real soldier of fortune story.

CAPTAIN SCRAGGS.—This sea yarn recounts the adventures of three rapscallion seafaring men.

THE LONG CHANCE.—Harley P. Hennage is a gambler, the best and worst man of San Pasqual, and there is the lovely Donna.

GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers*, NEW YORK